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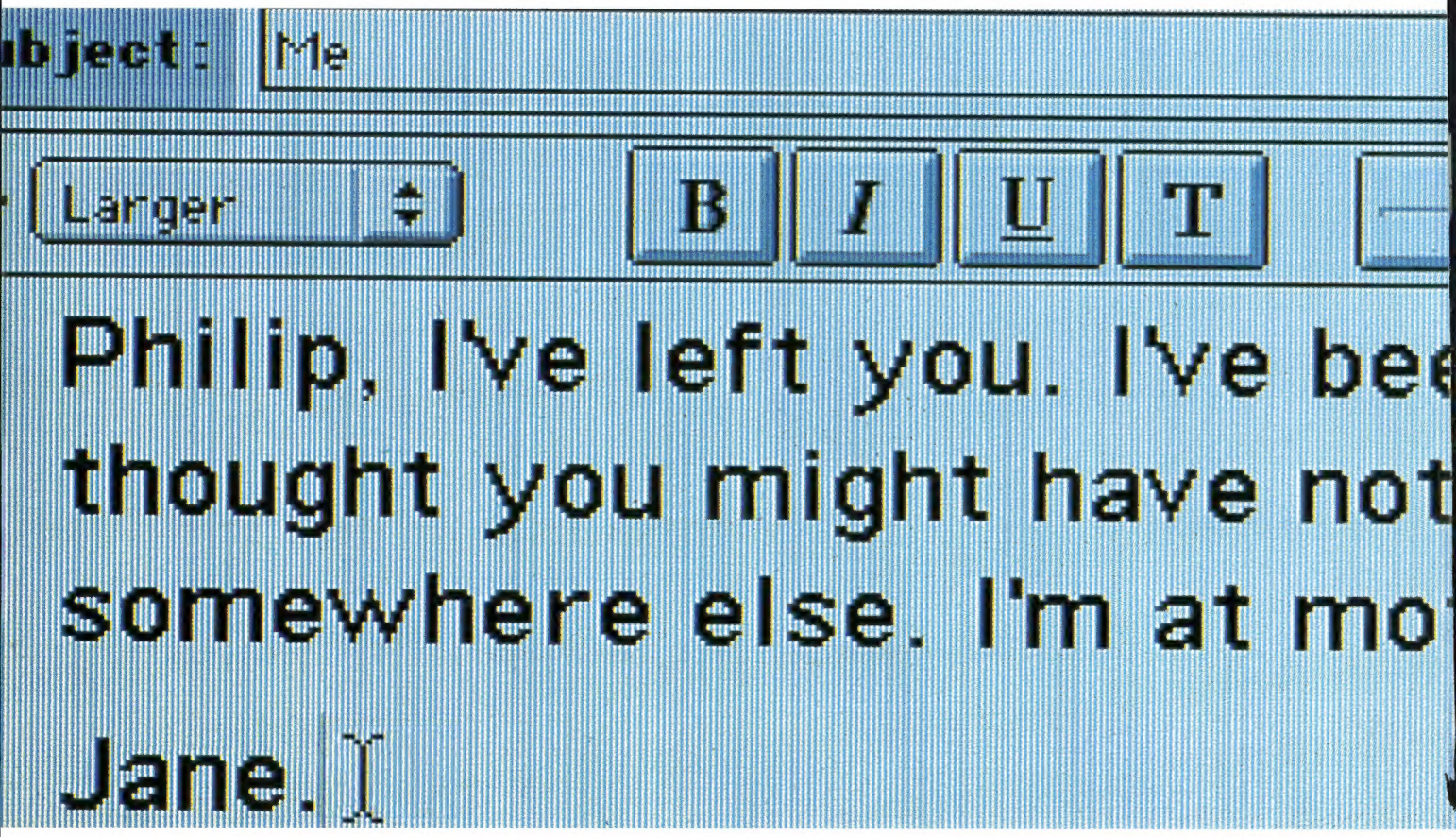

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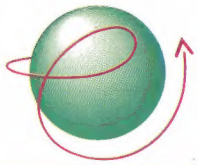

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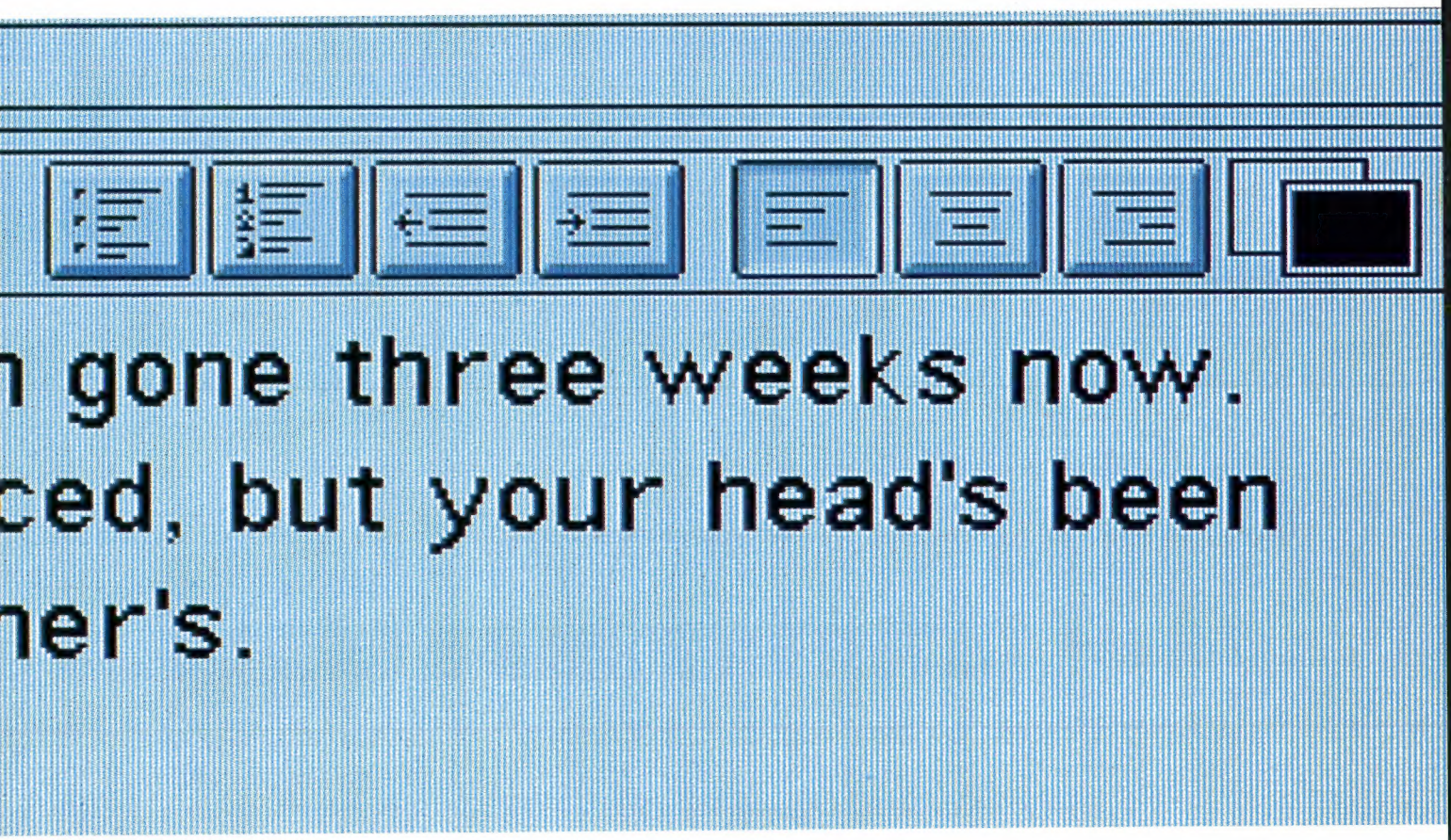

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Cover design: Michèle Heibel

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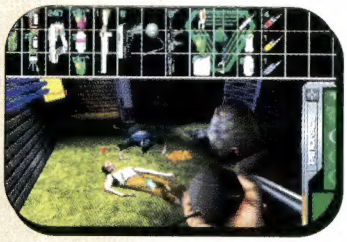

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Master Publisher 97 Part 1

***John Hilvert** gets you started with IMSI's productivity and education applications suite, on this month's cover CD.*

You'll be able to produce cool newsletters, business cards, flyers and invitations using just the first half of the Master Publisher suite on the November CD.

Part 1 of the download consists three (of six) free, fully self-contained, unlocked applications for you to use in Windows 3.1 or Windows 95/98 versions. They are Master Publisher 2.5, MasterDraw 3.5 and BorderCreator. There are extensive online help, sample template and tutorial files, and you also have access to 1,000 borders and 500 sample documents.

A Web publishing utility and extensive clip art and font collections are in Part 2, which will be on December's cover disc.

But let's get started. The IMSI package is modular, and you can install just the applications you want as you go, or use them all. Minimum system requirements are 486-level systems with 8Mb RAM. You can also go for minimum install, running most of it (slowly) from your CD-ROM with as little as 5Mb hard drive space. However, if you don't want to spend time watching that CD-ROM light go on and off, set aside 51Mb for Master Publisher and 32Mb for MasterDraw.

Click D:setup.exe (where D: is your CD-ROM drive). You'll be offered a choice of three programs: Master Publisher, MasterDraw and Border Creator. Click on each in turn and follow the instructions onscreen to complete the installation. If you are new to these applications, we recommend you install MasterPublisher and Border Creator initially.

In Windows 95 (and above), all programs can be uninstalled using the Windows Uninstall utility by clicking Computer\Control Panel\Add/Remove Programs.

In Windows 3.1, a message may appear towards the end of the installation informing you that SHARE.EXE needs to be set up. SHARE.EXE is a utility supplied with DOS and you won't be able to run MasterPublisher 97 until it's set up. We recommend that you let MasterPublisher and MasterDraw programs set up SHARE.EXE automatically.

USING THE COVER DISCS

The startup procedure for the cover discs uses the Autorun feature in Windows 95/98 to detect automatically whether or not you use Internet Explorer 3 or later as your default browser.

If you do, IE will run and you can start browsing our discs straight away. If not, our special Startup program will run, providing instructions on what to do next (please read carefully). Previously installed *PC User* icons will still work, and new Windows 3.1x users can still install these icons to browse our discs.

System requirements

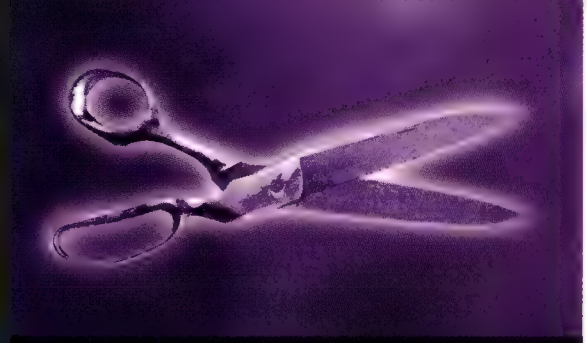
The *PC User* and PC Player discs can be used with any PC that reads DOS-based CD-ROMs. However, we recommend use with Microsoft Internet Explorer 3 or later for Windows 3.1 or 95, which requires at least a 486 with 8Mb of RAM. The third-party software on the CDs will often have higher system requirements.

Before using the CDs

We've provided installation instructions on the CD back cover and further details on the CD case inside cover, including what to do if you have problems. Please read these carefully before using our cover discs.

Also, please click on 'Please read this first' on the index page of either disc and read the terms and conditions of use before use. If you agree with the terms you may continue to use the CD, and this use will constitute your acceptance of the conditions stated. If you do not agree with all of the terms you may not continue to use the CD and you should return the CD and magazine to us for a refund.

We also recommend that you read our Help file, which is available from most of our CD pages.



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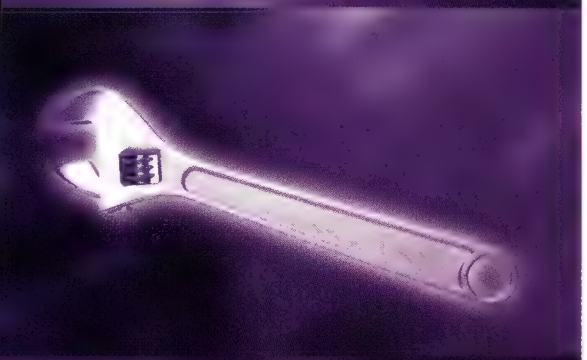

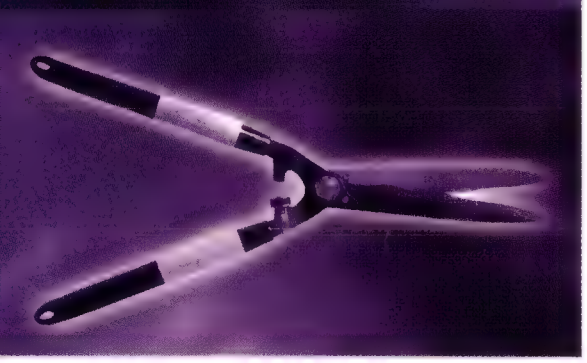

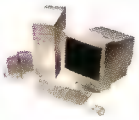

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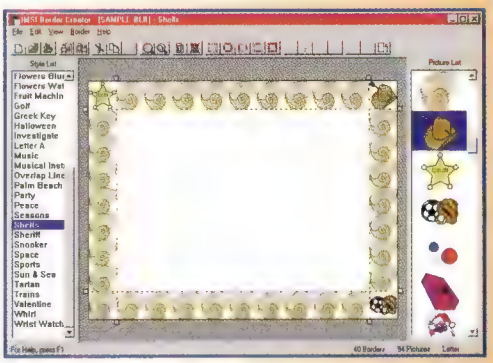

BorderCreator is a fun utility for creating colourful borders to complement Master Publisher

Unlike bitmap graphics, pictures in MasterDraw are made up of individual components, such as layers, text and graphics.

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Win a copy of Web Studio

When you subscribe to *PC User* (see page 96), you receive your own PC User Plus card. If you're already a subscriber and the number on your card matches one of those below, call (02) 9288 9111 to receive one of six copies of Web Studio, thanks to Sierra and Dataflow.

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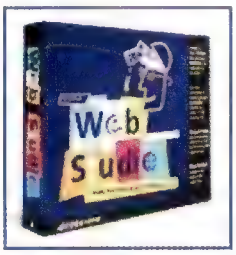

The online Help provides detailed information on every feature in MasterPublisher. Simply press F1 to access it.

On startup, there's a New User Guide to take you through three separate paths: a PagePilot, Start a New Document, or Open an Existing File. If you haven't used MasterPublisher before, it's easiest to start either by running a PagePilot or loading a template, because these options give you predefined guidelines within which you can work. Some of the work involved in laying out the document and creating paragraph styles has been done for you.

If you run a PagePilot, you can create a document quickly and easily. You simply choose the type of document you want and let the PagePilot guide you through some simple selections.

You can also load a template on which to base your new document. This is useful if you want to use a pre-defined layout for frequently used styles, such as newsletters or invitations. Several templates are supplied with Master Publisher and you can also add your own.

Although you get similar options opening MasterDraw, it's a very different program, designed for creating high-quality illustrations and technical drawings. The area in which you create pictures is called the picture window. The title bar shows the title of the picture you are working on. The information line across the bottom is used to display messages, tips and other information. Just above this is the colour bar, which shows the colours you can use in your picture. The rulers help you measure and position objects in your picture.

Down the left-hand side of the MasterDraw window (although you can put it wherever you like) is the toolbox. This contains the tools you need to add objects to your drawings.

MasterDraw has five shortcut toolbars to manipulate your drawing. To find out what a tool does, point the cursor at it. A yellow ToolTip appears. To get information about any part of the desktop, click on the What's This? tool, and then click on the relevant part of the desktop.

Unlike bitmap graphics, pictures in MasterDraw are made up of individual components, such as layers, text and graphics. Before you start work, you decide on the page, paper size and overall layout of your picture, either by using a template or PagePilot, or designing your own page layout. (However, you can change your mind about the page layout later, and change it in the Page Format dialog box.)

To make it easier, MasterDraw displays what your picture will look like before you print it out. Some fonts may be missing from the samples and a substitute will be offered. Next month, you'll receive the full set.

You can build up your picture using a variety of techniques. Most designs can be started from basic geometric shapes that you can reshape and manipulate — Master Draw has tools for drawing all the basic shapes. For precision drawing, you can use the Pencil tool, which is like using an ordinary pencil for drawing on paper.

UPGRADE OFFER

If you like Master Publisher 97, you're going to love the latest upgrade, Master Publisher 3. It features 3D text tools, Avery label support, Microsoft Office compatibility, Web publishing savvy and an awesome 750,000 clipart library. The package is normally $89.95, but until December 31, 1999, *PC User* readers can upgrade for just $69.95 (plus freight) by phoning 1800 658 367.

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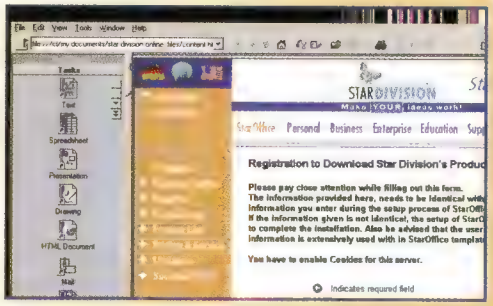
Using StarOffice

***Angela Booth** has some tips for trying this sensational free office suite.*

StarOffice has everything you'd expect from an office suite, and some additional features. Everything from a word processor (StarWriter) to a spreadsheet (StarCalc and StarChart), drawing module, HTML editor and PIM and presentations manager is included. Moreover, although StarOffice is feature-packed and powerful, it's also user-friendly and fun to use. The program is different from the other large office suites because you don't have to choose an application and then create a document. You simply choose the task you want to perform and StarOffice will open the application and load a document for you.

Installation

With StarOffice installed, you'll be invited to register the product after you run it a second time. This is optional and you can decline by endorsing 'Never register' if you prefer. During installation, you can also choose to make StarOffice your default Web browser and e-mail client.



You can open any document on your system right from the StarDesktop.

Creating new documents

StarOffice makes your work easy because it offers an integrated working environment. When you start the suite, you'll see that your Windows desktop is integrated into the StarDesktop. You can do all your work from here. All elements of the StarDesktop work together, like a combination of Windows Desktop and Explorer. The top menu and icon bar are like Windows Explorer; the icon bar (called the Function Bar) has an URL field, from which you can access recently used documents, or can type URLs you want to access on the Web.

To the left of the StarDesktop is the Explorer window, which operates much like the ShortCut Bar in Microsoft Outlook. Several groups have been created for you in the Explorer: Tasks, which enables you to create new StarOffice documents; a Work Folder, which defaults to Windows My Documents; Bookmarks, which defaults to your Favorites folder; and Explorer, which is the Windows Explorer. You can create your own groups in the Explorer by double-clicking on New Group at the top of the Explorer window.

To create a new document, make sure the Tasks group is open on the StarDesktop's Explorer and double-click on the type of document you want to create. To create a new spreadsheet, for example, just double-click on the spreadsheet icon. Create as many documents as you need, then switch between them using the Window menu, or by clicking on the document's name next to the StarOffice Start button.

Using the Scheduler and Task Manager

As you create new documents, you'll want to enter appointments and tasks. Here's how: in the Explorer window, click on Explorer. Select StarSchedule. Double-click on Events to create a new appointment. To create a new task, double-click on Tasks. You will see that the toolbar changes according to which area of StarSchedule you're working in.

Getting Help

StarOffice includes a comprehensive context-sensitive Help system (F1). If you need general help, choose Contents or Help Agent from the Help menu.

Essential tools in StarOffice

The Beamer makes it easy to add objects such as images to your StarOffice documents. You can access it from the toolbar icon, or by selecting View, Beamer. It shows you the contents of the element you've chosen in the StarOffice Explorer, and you can insert any of the contents shown in the Beamer into your current document. For example, if you choose the Explorer group in the Explorer and then choose Gallery, you'll see maps, images, shapes and sounds that you can insert into your document. Click on the object you want and drag it into your document. You can also copy, move and delete files directly from the Beamer. Double-clicking on a file opens it.

The Navigator operates from within a document and lets you jump to any object in your document instantly. It gives you information about the objects in your document and can manipulate them. The objects you can view/manipulate include Headings, Tables, Text Frames, OLE objects, Bookmarks, Hyperlinks and more. You can restructure headings in your document by dragging them in the Navigator, rather than trying to drag them around in the document itself.

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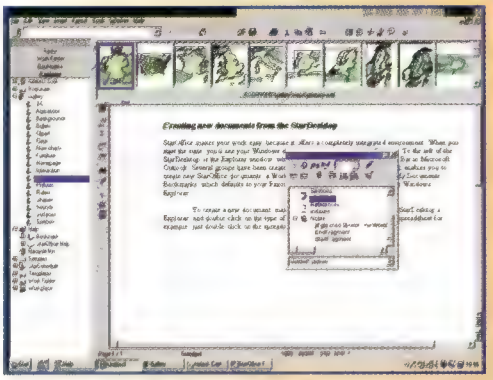


The Beamer and the Navigator: you can drag elements from the Beamer right into your StarOffice documents.

One of the Navigator's most useful features is the ability to set temporary reminders for yourself at various locations in your documents, which makes it easy to move around to the areas you want to work on.

Templates cover all kinds of business purposes — everything from a personal fax or cash journal to a professional invoice. Templates are documents with some basic elements already inserted. For example, a fax template creates documents that have been pre-formatted as faxes and have your own information (address and fax number) already inserted. To see the templates, press the StarOffice Start button on the bottom left of your screen, and choose More, From Template. The New Document from a Template dialog box opens. On the left, you'll see many different categories. Select one, and you'll see the available templates in that category. If you press the More button, the dialog box opens further. Tick the Preview box and you will be able to see previews of the templates you select. When you've decided on a template, press OK and your new document based on that template will open. You can create your own templates by designing a document and then saving it as a template by choosing 'Save As A StarOffice template' from the File menu.

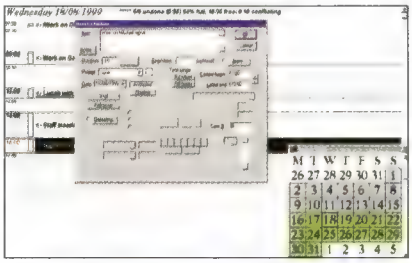
Elite shareware

***Angela Booth** takes you through this nifty productivity application.*

Above and Beyond

Above and Beyond is a unique PIM, not only because it manages your schedule automatically, but also because it has a mile of features that help to make you more productive.

1. The best way to get started with the program is to begin entering the tasks and appointments you have for the day. To enter a new task, press the Insert key. Type the Item description. You can add Notes, a Begin Time, the



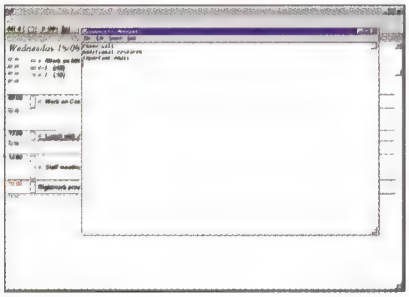
Duration (the default is 10 minutes) and an Alarm to each item.

2. To add an appointment, press Ctrl+Insert. As with tasks, you can add Notes or an Alarm, or make the appointment recurring.

3. If you want to add an item that is not an appointment or a task, such as a reminder or note to yourself, press Alt+Insert. The Memo dialog box opens and you can add as much information as you need.

4. Above and Beyond has many useful tools, such as the Surprise List and the Projects list, which help you to charge accurately for your time.

5. Surprises are items which occur frequently but you can't plan for, such as phone calls. Keeping a record of these is important if you're charging for your time. You can make a list of the Surprises in your day and then enter them with a couple of clicks. To add or delete Surprise items, choose Surprise,



Edit Surprise List from the menu. Notepad will open. Enter your list of Surprises, following each with a hard return. You can have up to 20 Surprises in your list.

6. If you're billing for your time, you'll also want to make use of the Projects List, because you'll see exactly how much time you spend working on each project. Choose View, Projects List from the menu. You can assign account numbers to your projects to make it easy to tally the time you've spent on a project for a client.

7. Inevitably, you'll find that at the end of the day you have several tasks you haven't finished. Above and Beyond makes it easy to deal with these tasks. Just choose Juggle and Balance Workload from the menu. All your undone tasks are moved to future days and times, depending on priority order.

Y2K's coming. Don't just sit there.

It'll be the end of the world if you lose your data.

And that could come with the new millennium, or computer crashes, or accidental deletion, or even a virus. In short, if you haven't backed up your computer data, you could lose it. But there is a solution. With Iomega's range of portable storage media and bundled software solutions, getting help is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Back Up Before anything else, use Iomega® disks, drives, and software to make copies of everything on your PC.

2. Update Use Iomega's bundled software to diagnose potential problems and either fix or update your PC.

3. Protect Now that you're on your way, Iomega software automatically protects your files well into the next millennium.

So save yourself and relax.

Iomega's innovative software solutions make protecting your data even easier and more convenient: QuikSync automatically backs up your files whenever you save data on your hard disk; Norton™ Zip® Rescue recovers your data when your hard disk crashes and Password Protection prevents unauthorised access to your data.

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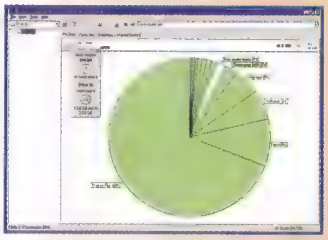
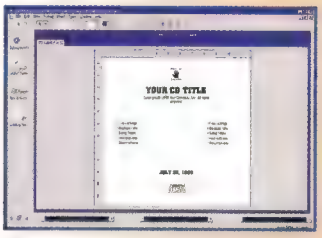
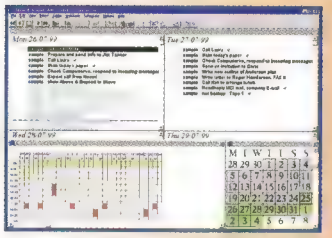


Disk Space Explorer examine your hard disks for wastage.



Create eye-catching labels for all your CDs with SureThing.



Above and Beyond is the ultimate way to manage your schedule.

ELITE SHAREWARE ON DISC 1

Name	Category	Price	Description	Rating
Above and Beyond 2000	PIMs	$US59.95 Lite or $US149.95 Pro	Dynamically manages your schedule.	●●●●●
ClipCheck 1.0	Text	30-day trial ($US19.95)	Spell check text that you copy to the clipboard.	●●●●●
Pegasus Mail for Windows 3.11	E-mail	Free	E-mail client that is kept current with frequent updates.	●●●●●
Quick To-Do Pro 3.31	PIM	$38.95	Effectively manages your task list.	●●●●●
Just the Fax 2.8i	Fax	$US19.95	Smart and efficient WYSIWYG faxing program.	●●●●◗
SureThing CD Labeller 2.0	Multimedia	30-day trial ($US39.95)	Create CD labels.	●●●●●
Umap Web 1.8a	Internet	$US29.95	Searches the Web and analyses the results for you.	●●●●◗
Jot + Notes	Text	$US37	Cardfile replacement.	●●●●◗
EZ-Forms XL 99E 3.01	Applications	$US149	Creates forms, either scanned in or from scratch.	●●●●◗
MultiFormat Editor 1.1.3	Text	Free	Edit various text files in their native environment.	●●●●●
Unbreakable Encryption 2.1	Security	$US49.95	Keep your vital data totally safe with 2040-bit encryption.	●●●●●
Boxer 99 8.0	Text	$US59	Fast and powerful text editor.	●●●●●
Visual Mind 2.62	PIM	$US69	Mind-mapping program.	●●●●●
Brownbag Memorymate 2.1	Database	$US40	Combo word processor/database and Internet search engine; includes encryption.	●●●●●
Letter Writer 2.0a	Text	Free	Fast and simple word processor that has lots of business letters included.	●●●●●
NetPad 3.3	Internet	$US19.95	Collects and organises information you find on the Internet.	●●●●●
WinZip 7.0 SR-1	Utilities	$US29	Elegant archive manager.	●●●●●
NetSonic 1.02	Internet	Free	Caches Web pages to speed up your surfing.	●●●●
File-Ex 98 2.12c	Utilities	$US29.95	Manage your files from within your applications.	●●●●
TravelJack 3.0	Utilities	$US39	Tracks world times, currencies and measurements.	●●●●◗
Pack It! 1.3	Utility	$US39	Keeps your files organised and backed up.	●●●●
ClipMate 5.03	Utility	$US25	Turns your Windows clipboard into an information database.	●●●●●
IrfanView 3.05	Utility	Free	An image viewer and manager, thumbnail viewer, multimedia player and more.	●●●●●
ImageConverter Plus 3.0	Utility	$US29	Converts images from one format to another.	●●●●◗
EZ Macros 4.0	Utility	$US29.95	A fast and easy way to automate your tasks in Windows.	●●●●◗
FileQuest Lite 1.0	Utility	$US19.95	Customisable Explorer replacement that eases your file-keeping chores.	●●●●◗
LinkMenu 1.20d	Utility	Free	Icon bar for launching program, documents and URLs.	●●●●●
Smart Uninstaller 1.0	Utility	Free	Removes every trace of uninstalled apps.	●●●●●
Audiograbber 1.50	Multimedia	$US25	Grabs digital audio tracks from your CDs.	●●●●●
FileSplit 2.2	Utility	$US10	Divides large files to make them easier to transport.	●●●●◗
Disk Space Explorer Pro 2.0	Utility	$US29.95	Examines your hard drives for wasted space.	●●●●●
SmartWord 1.10	Utility	$US15	Combo Find File/Quick Launch utility. Start any app or open any file with a single word.	●●●●◗
System SnapShot 1.0	Utility	Free	Tracks changes made to your system.	●●●●●

Need better back-up?

Your data is valuable, so finding a data media product you can trust is invaluable. That's where Sony comes in. Our commitment to quality and innovation guarantees increased reliability and total peace of mind. In short, better media means safer storage. So no matter what you back up with, Sony has you covered. To learn more about saving your data, visit our website at www.sony.com.au or call 1800 226 429. **It's a Sony.**

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Micro Floppy Disc

MO

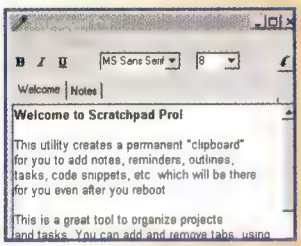
DVD+RW

CDRW/CDR

FNL SCP0097/PCU

LATEST SHAREWARE

Name	Category	Price	Description	Rating
Windows 95/98				
KeeBoo 1.0	Text	Free	Create your own e-books.	●●●●●
PushPin 1.0	Utilities	Free	Keep any window always on top.	●●●●
Urlybird 1.09	Internet	Free	A simple and fast way to manage URLs.	●●●●
Broken Cross CD Manager 1.31	Multimedia	Free	Catalogue the contents of your CDs.	●●●◗
ClipMagic 2.1	Utility	30-use trial ($US29.95)	Clipboard enhancer; store and annotate cuttings from Web pages.	●●●●
Actioneer Smart Portal Service 3.0	Internet	Free	One-click access to your PIM and the Web.	●●●●
NoteWorks Lite 4.0.9	PIM	Free	Sticky notes/PIM combo with Microsoft Outlook integration.	●●●●
ScratchPad Pro 2.0	Text	$US9.95	Permanent notepad for your desktop.	●●●●
Document Press 1.10	Archive	$US15	Compresses your Microsoft Office files to save space.	●●●◗
SmartDraw 4.12	Multimedia	$US49 Standard; $US99 Pro	Quickly draw flowcharts, organisational drawings, and forms.	●●●●●
Windows				
ZoomTools 1.3	Utilities	$US20	Magnify, measure and manipulate your graphics.	●●●●
DOS				
Swift 1.0	Text	Free	A simple DOS word processor.	●●●●
Palm				
Symantec Mobile WinFax 1.0	Palm	Trial ($US45)	Send and receive faxes.	●●●●●
CSpotRun 0.4	Palm	Free	Document reader.	●●●●
SmartDoc 1.2	Palm	$US19.95	Read, create and distribute text documents using the Palm DOC format.	●●●●◗



ScratchPad Pro operates just like the notepad on your desk, but it's permanently available on your PC.

EDUCATIONAL SHAREWARE

Name	Price	Description	Rating
Revenge of the Riddle Spiders Level A	Free	Uses riddles to strengthen critical thinking and reading comprehension.	●●●◗
A+QuizMaster	Free	Practice for tests, essay-type, multiple-choice or true or false quizzes.	●●●◗
50 Great Mathematical Games	Free	Games for students aged 12+ that show how maths is used in everyday life.	●●●●
ABCs	Free	Improves computer skills using games that teach letters, numbers, shapes and colours.	●●●
3D Graph	Free	Lets you graph functions of the form Z(x,y) in 3D, and rotate, zoom, and adjust the resolution	●●●●◗
Algebra One on One	$14.99	A fun way to learn and practise algebra.	●●●◗

ISP KITS

OzEmail

Telstra Big Pond

TPG

ONLINE TOOLS

Internet Explorer 5 for Windows 95/NT

Internet Explorer 5 for Windows 3.1

Netscape Communicator for Windows 95/98/NT

Netscape Communicator for Windows 3.1

UTILITIES

PartitionMagic updates 4.0 to 4.01

Rescue Diskette utility patch to 4.01

BootMagic 1.0 to 1.01 patch

PartitionMagic 4.0 demo

PartitionMagic user guides and documentation

PATCHES & SUPPORT FILES

Visual Basic 6 (with SP3) Runtime Files

NT4 Service Pack 5

PC USER INTERACTIVE

Web Workshop: jazz up your site for special holidays.

Shaping images: make scanned photos any shape you like.

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LG's digital Flatron PC monitor has a completely flat, distortion-free screen that results in the most life-like images ever.

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LATEST GAME DEMOS ON DISC 2

Game demos

Name	Genre	Description	System requirements
Homeworld	Real-time strategy	Space game from Sierra uses a true 3D environment.	PII233, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1), 4Mb SVGA graphics card (includes 3D card support)
Prince of Persia 3D	3D action	Fluid, realistic animation and plenty of combat.	PII233, 64Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.0), 8Mb Direct3D compatible 3D card
Rainbow Six 2: Rogue Spear	3D action	Command a squadron of military specialists and go on an anti-terrorist world tour.	PII233, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1), Direct3D compatible 3D card
NHL 2000	Sports sim	EA Sport's pro hockey game, featuring the new Dynasty Mode.	P200, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.0)
Battlezone II	Action/strategy	A small taste of Activision's forthcoming sequel. Superb 3D graphics.	PII233, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1), Direct3D compatible 3D card
Driver	Driving action	You're an undercover police officer driving the getaway car for a gang of crooks.	P166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95/98 or NT4.0 (DirectX6.0)
Darkstone	3D action/role-playing	As a knight, monk, thief, or sorcerer, creep through dungeons, explore towns and wilderness, and slay enemies on your quest.	PII233, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1), Direct3D compatible 3D card
3D Ultra Lionel Train Town Expert Pool	Puzzle Sports sim	From 3D Ultra. Complete hilarious and zany tasks. Realistic pool game with 3D graphics and fully animated characters.	P120, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.0) P166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1)
Mob Rule	Strategy	SimCity meets *The Godfather*.	P166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.0)
Nocturne	3D adventure	Creepy and gory new game from Gathering of Developers.	PII233, 128Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1), Direct3D compatible 3D card
Iron Strategy	Arcade	Control huge fighting robots in pure action mode or directing a platoon.	P200, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX6.1)

CD rippers

Name	Price	Description	Rating
MusicMatch Jukebox 4.10	Free	MP3 program now with a player, music library and unlimited recording.	●●●●
Virtuosa Gold 3.10a	15-day trial ($US29.99)	All-in-one jukebox that rips, encodes, downloads, plays, organises and burns.	●●●◗
Audiograbber 1.50	Free	Copies CD audio tracks to your hard drive digitally, not through your sound card.	●●●◗
Dart Pro	Evaluation	Record sound from analog or digital sources, clean it up, make playlists and write to a CD.	●●●●
Diamond Cut	Evaluation ($US99)	State-of-the-art noise reduction for the PC.	●●●◗
CANAM DirectX Effects	Evaluation ($US99)	Include Autopan, Autowah, Dynamics, Harmonizer, Phaser, Reverberator, various Chorus, delays and more.	●●●◗
GolderHawk CD-R WIN	Demo	Create data, audio, mixed-mode or multisession CDs.	●●●◗
hyCD Play & Record	Free	Copying, ripping, MP3 encoding and decoding, audio resampling, audio effect, CD-R. MP3 player .for CD, WAV and MP3 files	●●●◗
Red Roaster 5.0	Feature limited	Program of choice for two-track mastering of audio CDs. Real-time CD burning on the fly.	●●●●

Homeworld adds a third dimension to RTS games.

The animation in Prince of Persia 3D is astounding.

GAME UTILITIES
WinZip
DirectX 6.1

GAME PATCHES
Fly!
Dungeon Keeper 2
Starfleet Command
Jagged Alliance II
Spec Ops: Ranger Team Bravo
Hidden & Dangerous
Delta Force
Might & Magic VII
Civilization: Call to Power

BUG PATROL
WordPerfect Office Service Pack 1
CorelDraw 9 Service Pack 1
Moto Racer 2

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Inbox

Disappointed

Regarding your disappointing processor comparison in the September '99 issue: I favour neither AMD or Intel, but your approach doesn't make sense. Comparing the systems using different components is misleading and unfair to either company. According to other sources, the Athlon does seem to do better in the various benchmarks, but on similar systems. I don't understand why you've used a better video card in your tests for the Athlon than you did for the others, as well as an extra 64Mb of RAM. The drivers you chose reflect this approach, as you've used updated TNT drivers for the Athlon and older drivers for the others. As your magazine targets less experienced users, you need to be more circumspect in the information you present.
Darren Dobson
Central Coast Computers

Thanks for the help

A few months ago, I participated in the Australian Schools Computer Studies Competition and my results are: 42 out of 45, the top band in the school and 98th in the state. I would like to thank you for sponsoring the competition and let you know that it's made me even more motivated to pursue a programming or network troubleshooting career. I also want to mention that your magazine is always a great read.
Cameron Ford
Internet

Lucky with Linux

I am glad that you have finally mentioned Linux. It's good that this wonderful operating system is finally getting decent recognition. Also, regarding Stuart Kennedy's complaints about lack of information on installation packages, I had no trouble finding it using the same CD. It is mentioned in the *Pocketbook* that all you have to do is press F1 and it shows a description of the package. I look forward to further articles on Linux.
Nathan Tomkins
Internet

Choices

In your last edition, someone wrote in about a problem with a Plustek scanner: he had to switch on his printer for it to work. I also had this problem. Plustek sent an ISA scanner card to my supplier for free. I later upgraded my motherboard, slipped over to W98 and the problem was solved. Also, I have been struggling to find the best way of making two changes to my computer. You may be interested in my conclusions:

The first change was that I added a colour/A3 inkjet printer. I already have a Panasonic laser printer and wanted to connect both. I tried a few alternatives:

- Changing the printer lead. However, something will eventually get broken.
- Install a data switch. This only costs $20, but will I remember to switch it?
- Install an automatic data switch: $40.
- My Panasonic has a serial interface which I haven't used. I made up a serial printer lead, as normal leads do not have the right pin configurations. This worked OK, but so slowly that it was irritating.
- Install a printer port card set to LPT2. However, these only come in ISA, and I already have ISA slots used. Is it time to buy a 56K PCI modem and free up an ISA slot?
- Use a parallel to USB port adaptor. This has the advantage of using a USB port that is currently idle. However, I don't know enough to know if this would work.

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Duplicating Towers The big guns. Stand Alone.

CAT Robotic Duplicators Automatic loading. Stand alone.

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NEW UPDATED RANGE

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Fortune magazine Dec 7 1998

Verbatim brings you the acclaimed Smart and Friendly range of CD Recorders universally praised for their speed, reliability and overall package quality. You can record music, data, video, digital photos, images and documents direct to CDs. The CDs you create will hold more and cost less than ever before and are compatible with any existing CD Rom drive or audio CD player.

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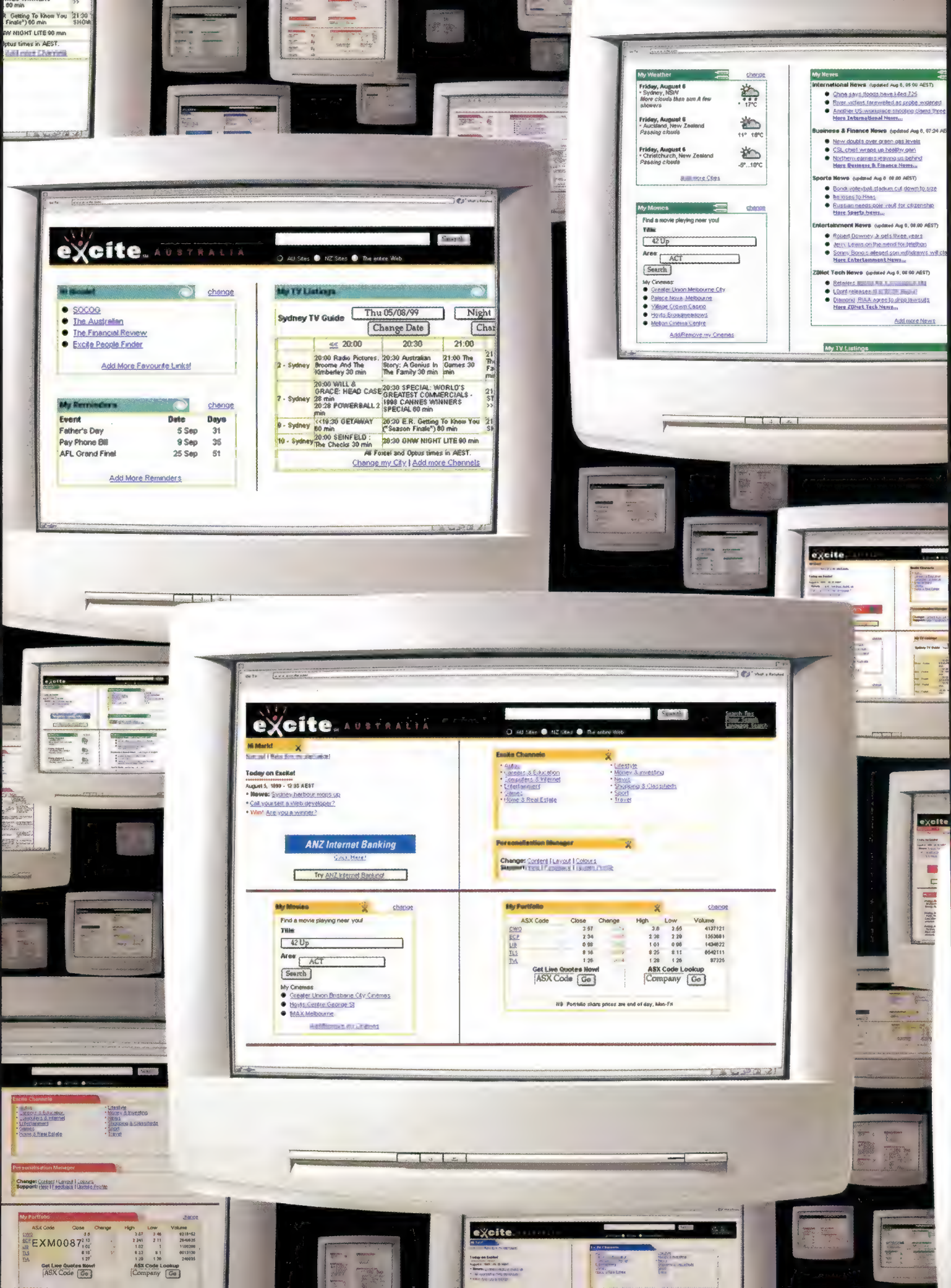
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All Sites
NZ Sites
The entire Web
change
SOCOG
The Australian
The Financial Review
Excite People Finder
Add More Favourite Links!
My Reminders
change
Event
Date
Days
Father's Day
5 Sep
31
Pay Phone Bill
9 Sep
35
AFL Grand Final
25 Sep
51
Add More Reminders
My TV Listings
Sydney TV Guide
Thu 05/08/99
Night
Change Date
20:00
20:30
21:00
2 - Sydney
20:00 Radio Pictures: Broome And The Kimberley 30 min
20:30 Australian Story: A Genius In The Family 30 min
21:00 The Games 30 min
7 - Sydney
20:00 WILL & GRACE: HEAD CASE 28 min
20:28 POWERBALL 2 min
20:30 SPECIAL: WORLD'S GREATEST COMMERCIALS - 1998 CANNES WINNERS SPECIAL 60 min
9 - Sydney
<<19:30 GETAWAY 60 min
20:30 E.R. Getting To Know You ("Season Finale") 60 min
10 - Sydney
20:00 SEINFELD : The Checks 30 min
20:30 GNW NIGHT LITE 90 min
All Foxtel and Optus times in AEST.
Change my City | Add more Channels
My Weather
change
Friday, August 6
• Sydney, NSW
More clouds than sun A few showers
17°C
Friday, August 6
• Auckland, New Zealand
Passing clouds
11° 18°C
Friday, August 6
• Christchurch, New Zealand
Passing clouds
-5°...10°C
Add more Cities
My Movies
change
Find a movie playing near you!
Title:
42 Up
Area:
ACT
Search
My Cinemas:
Greater Union Melbourne City
Palace Nova Melbourne
Village Crown Casino
Hoyts Broadmeadows
Melton Cinema Centre
Add/Remove my Cinemas
My News
International News (updated Aug 6, 05:00 AEST)
China says floods have killed 726
River outlook fair provided as probe widened
Another US workplace shooting claims three
More International News...
Business & Finance News (updated Aug 6, 07:24 AE
New doubts over green gas levels
CSL chief wraps up healthy gain
Northern earners leaving us behind
More Business & Finance News...
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Bondi volleyball stadium cut down to size
No losses to Haas
Russian needs pole vault for citizenship
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Entertainment News (updated Aug 6, 08:00 AEST)
Robert Downey Jr gets three years
Jerry Lewis on the mend for telethon
Sonny Bono's alleged son withdraws will cla
More Entertainment News...
ZDNet Tech News (updated Aug 6, 08:00 AEST)
Retailers
Lycos releases
Diamond RIAA agree to drop lawsuits
More ZDNet Tech News...
Add more News
My TV Listings
excite AUSTRALIA
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NZ Sites
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Volume
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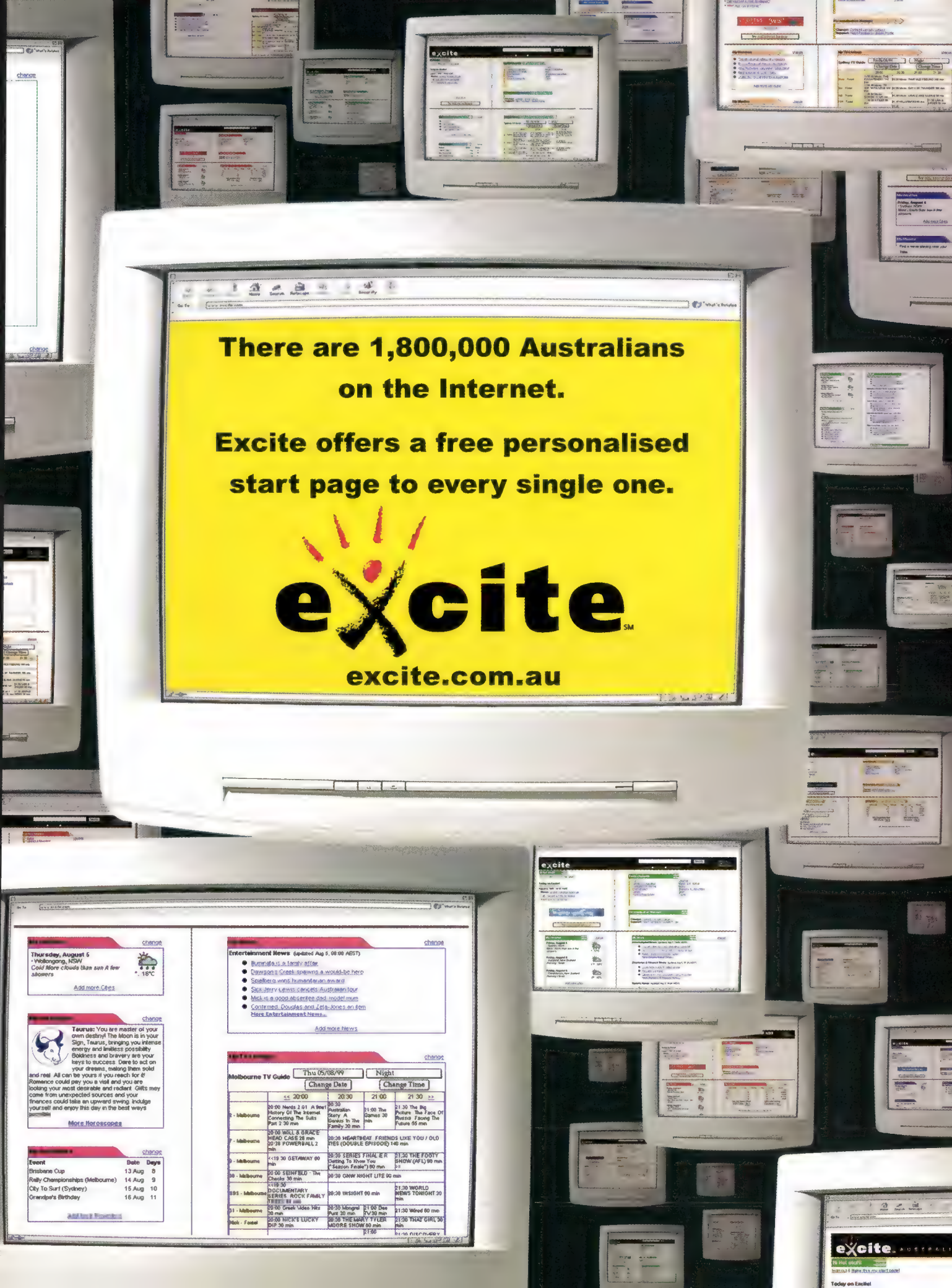
ECP
LIB
TLS
TYA
Get Live Quotes Now!
ASX Code
Go
ASX Code Lookup
Company
Go
NB: Portfolio share prices are end of day, Mon-Fri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excite
excite.com.au

LETTER OF THE MONTH: LOGITECH MICE AND MODEMS DON'T MIX

Just a tip for all readers who are having problems with modem disconnections and who also own Logitech mice. I often get disconnected from the Internet, so I rang my ISP, who suggested changes to my modem string, and I also rang Netcomm customer support, and was about to send the modem back to be repaired when I upgraded to Windows 98. I own a Logitech First Mouse+ and the default Wheelmouse drivers worked fine, without any disruptions — that is, until I reloaded my Logitech drivers. An e-mail from Logitech tech support confirmed that sometimes the drivers try to initialise the modem as a mouse.

They suggest getting the latest drivers (didn't help), or editing the registry. I'm happy to use the default drivers, but I'll include the method sent to me by Logitech as well. Back up your registry first!

- Click on the Start menu and select Run.
- Type C:\WINDOWS\REGEDIT.EXE on the 'Open' line.
- Click OK. The Registry Editor program will appear.
- Double-click on the HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE folder.
- Double-click on the SOFTWARE folder.
- Double-click on the Logitech folder.
- Double-click on the MouseWare folder.
- Double-click on the CurrentVersion folder.
- Single-click on the Global folder.
- For this example, we will assume the mouse is on COM1 and the modem is on COM2. On the right side of the screen, there will be a list of value data strings. Double-click on the 'PortSearchOrder' string. An Edit String dialog box will appear. The Value Data line will read: COM1, COM2
- Remove the space, the comma and 'COM2' so the line reads as follows: COM1

If you only plan to use one mouse on the system, change the 'MaximumDevices' value data line to '1', using the same steps as above. This will tell the driver to stop searching for additional mouses after the primary mouse has been found. Note: If you are not using a serial mouse, remove 'Serial' from the 'SearchOrder' value data line so that serial devices are not searched for at all. In general, remove any reference to the port that the modem is using.

- Click OK and the values under the data value section on the right side of the screen should change. Exit the registry editor (saving is automatic). Click on the Start menu and select 'Shut down the computer'. Be sure to power down the system so the modem will do a hardware reset before restarting the system and going back into Windows.

Hope this is of some help.

Ty Pendlebury
Internet

The writer of the best letter to PC User *each month will win a software title selected from Dataflow's extensive catalog. This month's winner receives a copy of McAfee Office 2000. Just send your letter of no more than 300 words to* PC User *(see 'How to contact us'), and please include your postal address and daytime telephone number.*

Entry is open to all residents of Australia other than employees of ACP Publishing or Dataflow. Entry for December 1999 closes on 20 October 1999 The judges' decision is final. All entries become the property of ACP Publishing.

dataflow

The second change concerns a four-CD program. Others might be in the same situation if they use CorelDraw. I've previously solved this by installing a jukebox 4CD player. The extra CD player was installed via a soundcard with an integrated IDE connector which acts as a tertiary channel. This has been successful; however, there may now be different ways to tackle the problem. Another alternative is to install a CD burner and see if I can fit all the files from the four CDs that I regularly use on to one CD. However, the simplest solution is to buy a 13Gb hard disk and copy the CDs. This would be easier to manage and quicker.

Stephen Miller
Sydney

Deceived with vain words

I purchased a PC locally for overseas use with overseas warranty confirmed. It was cheaper to buy a pre-configured model rather than configuring a cheaper one. The packaging had everything to indicate that the product was genuine, including a certificate of authenticity, 'Microsoft' in three places on the front and 'genuine' three times on the cover.

It states, however: 'For distribution with a new PC only. For product support, contact the manufacturer of your PC.' The first sentence clearly indicates a licensing agreement which prevents it from being sold alone. The second indicates that it has been sold to the distributor without support from the original supplier. The product is not Microsoft Windows 98, but a changed version. Some features described in the handbook do not work, and it is not compatible with Windows (this is confirmed on the CD and by the error message it produces) There is no guarantee that it will work on any other PC, or with Windows-compatible software. All it says is that 'information in this document is subject to change without notice'. The bundled software is licensed by Microsoft to carry its logo, but with unknown changes. I now have a Windows 98 SE that cannot be installed and Microsoft has advised me to re format my hard drive and try again.

Leif (last name withheld by request)
Internet

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your business

a helping hand.

Introducing the MFC-7160C 8-in-1 Multi-function Centre.™ It's every machine your business needs in one. Including: •A high speed colour printer which delivers at 1440dpi resolution with studio quality colour •A colour digital copier which can enlarge up to 200% •A colour scanner •A plain paper fax •A PC fax •A Message Centre™ with built-in answering machine •A speaker phone •A unique colour video printer allowing you to print straight from your digital/video camera. Now that should lighten your load. For further information please visit www.brother.com

You can always rely on your brother.

Pentium III 600

PROCESSORS

Intel's new 600MHz chip lags behind Athlon

***Darren Yates** puts Intel's new i820 motherboard and 533 and 600MHz Pentium III chips through their paces.*

As predicted in these pages, AMD has begun volume shipments of the 700MHz Athlon processor in Europe. Details of the chip's arrival in Australia are not available yet, but I suspect it will be some time this month. AMD is keeping to its promise of continuing to ramp up the Athlon chip and I would be surprised if it doesn't get to 800MHz by the end of the year.

Intel CEO Craig Barrett has reportedly been promising recently that Intel will release the much-delayed Coppermine Pentium III with a speed of at least 700MHz at the end of October. That version of the Pentium III is functionally the same as the current version, except that it will include 256Kb of secondary level 'turbo-boosting' cache on the silicon itself, not in the external cartridge — in fact, it will remove the need for an external cartridge. Intel has confirmed that a Socket-370 version of the Pentium III will go into production.

AMD has so far managed to stay one step ahead of Intel.

But the big news from Intel this month is the release of the i820 (Camino) motherboard. This long-awaited board has new RAMBUS dynamic RAM (RDRAM) and a faster 133MHz front-side bus (FSB) speed. To go with the new motherboard, Intel has also released two new chips: a 533MHz and a 600BMHz Pentium III. The 'B' signifies that the chip is rated to run on 133MHz FSB motherboards. The new Camino board is noteworthy for several reasons, one of which is that Intel has canned the ISA slot. There are none on the board at all, so if you're thinking of upgrading, you'd better make sure you have PCI cards.

The major new feature is the 64Mb of RAMBUS memory. It seems to be necessary to install dummy shielding cards in any unused memory slots, and the RDRAM cover and these shielding cards suggest that the RAMBUS memory can cause instability or 'radio frequency interference', within other areas of the system due to the very high clock speeds —

HOW THE PROCESSORS COMPARE

Processors	Quake II v3.05fps	Business Winstone 99	Business Graphics Winmark 99	Winbench 99 CPUmark-32	Price in $US in quantities of a 1000	Quake II Performance /US $100	Business Winstone 99 /US $100
AMD K6-2/350	33.7	17	132	769	$56	60.18	30.36
AMD K6-2/400	37.7	18.1	141	794	$41	91.95	44.15
AMD K6-III/400	55.7	21.6	197	1260	$98	56.84	22.04
Celeron-366	58.9	17.8	149	648	$49	120.20	36.33
Celeron-400	63.7	19	163	719	$57	111.75	33.33
Celeron-433	66.9	19.4	176	740	$75	89.20	25.87
Celeron-500	77.1	20.4	194	791	$167	46.17	12.22
Cyrix M2-300	19.6	DNF	122	537	$40	49.00	DNF
Cyrix M2-333	20.3	16.4	132	556	$42	48.33	39.05
Cyrix MII-366	DNF	16.8	122	587	$65	DNF	25.85
Pentium II-450	74.7	21.1	185	1110	$183	40.82	11.53
Pentium III-500	79.9	22	204	1210	$251	31.83	8.76
Pentium III-550	84.3	22.7	219	1320	$487	17.31	4.66
Pentium III-533	85.9	22.8	209	1250	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pentium III-600	87.8	23.2	238	1400	N/A	N/A	N/A
AMD Athlon-600	135.4*	24.6	283	1550	$615	22.02	4.00

*Score achieved using Diamond Viper V770 card, remaining scores used Diamond Viper V550 card.
DNF = processor could not complete this benchmark.

- AMD chips used Quake II v3.19 with 3DNow! OpenGL drivers
- Winstone, Winbench and associated programs are registered trademarks of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company in the US and other countries.
- These tests were performed without independent verification of Ziff-Davis, and Ziff-Davis makes no representations as to the results.
- Celeron-433 test carried out using over-clocked preproduction 400MHz Celeron processor with 66MHz FSB.

HOW WE TESTED THE PROCESSORS

In order to cater for all processors, we used several test systems: Slot 1, Socket-370 and Super7. Each processor was tested on the following components:

- Gigabyte GA-6BXC (82440BX) motherboard with BIOS revision 1.5 for Intel Pentium II and Pentium III processors up to 550MHz
- Epox mVP3 Super7 (512Kb L2-cache memory) motherboard for Socket 7-based processors
- FIC PA-2013 Super7 for the AMD K6-III/450
- iWill XA100 plus for the Cyrix MII-366
- Intel i820 Camino for 533 and 600MHz Pentium III
- 64Mb of 100MHz-rated SDRAM
- 64Mb of 133MHz-rated Samsung RAMBUS memory for the i820 motherboard
- 5.1Gb Quantum Fireball EL drive
- Ultra-DMA Mode 2 drive with no hardware disk caching
- Diamond Viper V550 3D graphics card
- Memory: 16Mb of SGRAM
- Software driver: Revision 4.10.01.0239
- 3D graphics chip: nVidia's Riva TNT
- 32X Hitachi CDR-8435 CD-ROM drive
- 15in digital plug and play monitor
- Screen size: 800 by 600 by 16-bit colour
- Refresh rate: 75Hz
- Microsoft Windows 98 Version 1.0

Both reference systems were supplied to us by Computers Direct Australia, phone (02) 9967 3488

The AMD Athlon system included:

- AMD Fester B3 motherboard
- 600MHz AMD Athlon (engineering sample)
- 128Mb of SDRAM
- Two 18Gb Western Digital Expert 418000 hard disk drives
- 5X Toshiba SD-M1212 DVD-ROM drive
- 32Mb Diamond Viper V770 graphics card
- Software driver: nvdisp.drv Revision 4.11.01.0188

The tests carried out were:

- Timedemo 1 on Quake II v3.20

This test, part of the popular action game, reveals the system's ability to play the latest 3D games, measuring the average frame rate in frames per second.

- Ziff-Davis' Business Winstone 99 Version 1.0

This test runs code from Corel WordPerfect Suite 8.0, Lotus SmartSuite, Microsoft Office 97 and Netscape Navigator to test performance from a business user's perspective.

- CPUmark-32 and Business Graphics Winmark 99 from Ziff-Davis' Winbench 99 Version 1.0

These are low-level benchmarks that test the performance of the system's component subsystems.

All Quake II tests were run at 640 by 480 pixels with default OpenGL drivers and default texturing settings. All AMD processors were tested using the latest AMD patches for Quake II, including the 3Dnow! OpenGL drivers. All other tests were run at 800 by 600-pixel resolution and 16-bit colour depth. The graphics refresh rate was set to 75Hz.

- Value indices: To rate the chips' value, we factored the two most critical results, the Quake II frame rate and Ziff-Davis Business Winstone 99 benchmark, by the most recent US-dollar price (for manufacturers buying 1000 chips or more) and multiplied by 100. The higher the score, the better.

RAMBUS memory can be clocked to 400MHz. The new memory also has a new pin arrangement so that you can't accidentally install SDRAM in its place.

In terms of graphics, Intel announced last month that it would no longer produce graphics chips, after its early mediocre attempts to break into the 3D graphics market. As a result, there is no integrated graphics solution on this board, but there is an external AGP slot capable of supporting 4X speeds. While overclockers' eyes might light up at these prospects, there isn't actually much to get excited about. As with most Intel motherboards, there are no FSB or multiplier settings either in BIOS (basic input/output system) or on the motherboard. The only thing you can adjust (and it's a painful way of doing it) is the clock speed, and the top setting is 600MHz. No doubt vendors such as Abit, Aopen and MSI will come out with i820 boards with extra tweaking features in the near future. The i820 also includes integrated audio based on Creative's Sound Blaster AudioPCI 128 sound controller.

One feature that we aren't quite sure about is the new audio modem riser (AMR) slot. A tiny expansion slot that sits on the processor side of the AGP slot, it's starting to appear on new motherboards and is designed to enable audio and modem functions to be taken out of the motherboard. It also allows Intel to get rid of the ISA expansion bus, something that's been on Intel's agenda for some time, and it will allow vendors to include 'software modems', which do away with the main modem chip, simply containing the electronics for interfacing with your phone line instead. All of the work the modem chip used to handle is then dumped onto the computer's processor, which seems to make software modems a bit pointless. Spending good money on a 3D graphics card with specialised processors to free up the main processor, only to slow it down again running a software modem? Doesn't sound clever.

Camino performance

We ran the new board and the 600MHz chip at both 533 and 600MHz using our venerable 16Mb Diamond Viper V550 graphics card and 5.1Gb Quantum Fireball EL hard disk drive and benchmarked the performance. As expected, the 533MHz version performs fractionally better on both Quake II and standard office applications under Windows 98 than the 550MHz Pentium III with its 100MHz frontside bus. Running the chip at the full 600MHz adds a bit more performance again, but we did find that it is still not up to the performance of the 600MHz AMD Athlon. We expect the new 700MHz Athlon chips to skip even further ahead.

Pentium II is dead . . . almost

Intel has called 'last round' to PC vendors for the 450MHz Pentium II. All other Pentium II desktop chips have also been discontinued.

More chips

It seems to have taken forever, but AMD has finally announced the release of the 500MHz K6-2 and K6-III processors, designed to compete with Intel's Celeron chip for the budget market. My tip is that this will be the end of the road for the K6-2, although AMD says it plans to increase its speed of the K6-2 in the future. We'll feature AMD's new 500MHz K6-2 chip in next month's round-up.

Merced lives

Intel has finally brought out samples of its Merced processor. This is the first Intel 64-bit processor developed in conjunction with Hewlett-Packard, and while it won't appear for another 12 months, it is a sign of future directions. While the company will not confirm it, I believe AMD also plans to bring the K8 out next year.

FileMaker Pro 5 beta

FileMaker goes high-end

DATABASES

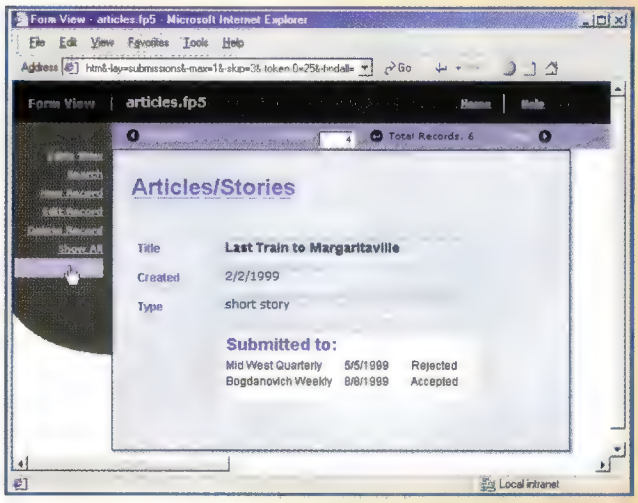
But it still hasn't lost its ease of use, as ***Rose Vines*** *reports.*

FileMaker started out many years ago as a simple database for Macintosh users. Over that time it has blossomed into a powerful relational database system for both PC and Mac users. Throughout its evolution it has maintained its original ease of use, making it a great choice for home users, small offices and even some larger organisations. The latest version, FileMaker Pro 5 (FMP 5), adds some crucial features which transform FileMaker into a serious alternative to more upmarket programs such as Microsoft's Access and Corel's Paradox.

We tested an early beta version of FMP 5 and found some amazingly powerful features lurking under its friendly interface. FileMaker is promoting the product as a tool for workgroups both in large corporations and smaller organisations, but it's just as much a product for individual users.

Goodies for workgroups

Some of the new features are definitely geared towards group use of databases. For example, ODBC (Open DataBase Connectivity) support has been boosted dramatically, with built-in ODBC drivers that allow FMP 5 databases to be used as data sources, front-end or target sources for other database management systems. This means you can design an interface in Visual Basic or Access and plug your FMP 5 data into the interface. You can also create structured query language (SQL) queries in FMP 5 to import data from an ODBC database such as Access or Oracle.



This screenshot shows the same database application as the one shown running in FileMaker Pro on the facing page, running as a stylish Web site. It takes very little effort to make the transition.

Other features that will attract workgroup users are enhancements to security and scripting. Security for shared databases, both on the Web and on networks, has been improved to help prevent users or uninvited visitors from accessing or tampering with databases. For example, you can now restrict Web-based access to specific Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. The ScriptMaker, which lets you automate a whole series of actions and add basic programming to an application, has also been improved. You can transfer scripts between databases, and the addition of ActiveX automation lets you automate tasks that involve other applications; for instance, you can use ActiveX to grab some data from an Excel spreadsheet and paste it into a report you've designed in FMP 5.

In fact, integration with Office 2000 has been a major focus for FMP 5, and its redesigned interface, as well as import, export and automation features, make it a good partner for Microsoft's Office suite.

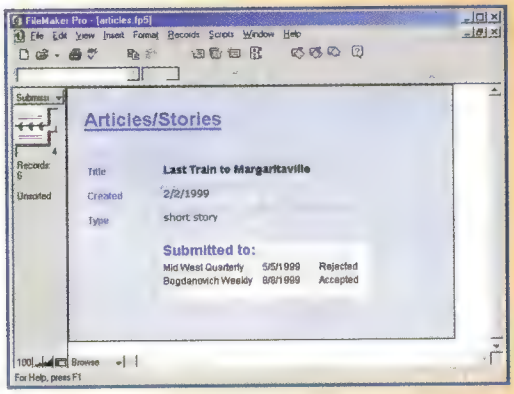
Goodies for everyone

Many other new features in FMP 5 will appeal to all users, not just those in workgroups. Before Version 5, FileMaker already made publishing data to the Internet or an intranet particularly easy; in many cases, almost a single-click operation. The Web Companion plug-in lets you publish live, dynamically updated data with consummate ease, provided that you can host your database on a Web server.

FMP 5 has made the Web publishing features even more impressive with support for Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). The program includes a selection of styles for producing handsome Web pages that not only display your data but also allow data entry, editing, sorting and a selection of views. Data published in this way must be viewed with a browser that supports CSS to a fairly high level. That leaves Navigator 4.x out, but includes Internet Explorer 4 or later. There's a text-only publishing style that is supported by most browsers.

FMP 5 also includes a host of general improvements to data management and application design. The program now includes a new table view for your data. This will appeal to spreadsheet users who are accustomed to analysing data in row and columns. You can also print data directly from table view.

Like previous versions, FMP 5 offers a completely customisable form view, which lets you view your data one record at a time. A new Layout/Report Assistant simplifies the cre-



FileMaker Pro 5 makes it easy to provide Web access to information stored within a database.

ation of forms and reports and provides a selection of views that include columnar, table, labels and envelope, and you can use the Assistant to help you add summary fields to reports.

When you're designing your own forms or customising any of the supplied templates, you'll be able to apply new three-dimensional effects and use custom colours, including a Web-safe palette.

For users who work on the move, a new data merging option lets you update records in one file with matching information from another file so you'll be able to keep your databases in sync.

A worthwhile upgrade

Part of FileMaker's appeal has always been that, despite adding power and muscle with each new version, the basic product has remained as easy to use as any simple database on the market. If you're an individual user scared off by the overwhelming features of the bigger databases, you won't find the new FileMaker nearly as intimidating. FileMaker Pro 5 gives you the opportunity to start out small, without limiting your options if your data needs expand in the future.

For more experienced users, FileMaker Pro 5's ODBC support, relational data management and intranet/Internet publishing features make it a competitor for products such as Access, Approach and Paradox. Its relational support and programming capabilities are neither as robust nor as powerful as more up-market databases, but the gap continues to narrow.

Distributor: Dataflow
Phone: (02) 9417 9700
Web: www.filemaker.com.au
Price: $399; upgrades $249

Ease of use: ●●●●●
Features: ●●●●
Value for money: ●●●●

PhotoImpact 5

More Web tools for graphics favourite

IMAGE EDITORS

***John Hilvert** is impressed by this cheap and versatile image manipulation tool.*

Ulead's latest upgrade of its entry-level to medium-grade image editing tool, PhotoImpact 5, not only throws down the gauntlet against its shareware rival Paintshop Pro, but offers killer Web tools to rattle Macromedia Fireworks' cage as well.

For those new to image editing, PhotoImpact has been the pick for the coolest graphics. Many small business, education and professional users have found PhotoImpact 4.2 can produce stylish effects as well as Adobe's high-end and hard-to-master Photoshop.

PhotoImpact 5 offers powerhouse image tools that are easy to use.

With PhotoImpact, if you want a drop shadow, you click Format/Frame & Shadow. You want to sharpen that little icon for the Web? Click Effect/Blur and Sharpen. You get an 'easy palette' with each of these functions that shows the effects in real-time preview in thumbnail options. Many PhotoImpact users, I suspect, rarely stray beyond using these easy but powerful transformation tools.

Last year the SmartSaver facility made it easy to reduce the size of graphic files while maintaining quality by real-time visual comparisons. This is now called Image Optimizer, and it's still the best of any package. PhotoImpact also continues to offer its layered image creation so that images, parts of images and text can be moved around and aligned above and below, like objects, until everything is just right.

It also lets you 'spray' random objects; so you could depict a garden by spraying different plant objects. There are also batch processing and automation tools to speed up multiple file conversions.

PhotoImpact 5's most intriguing features are to be found in its Web graphics tools. It does Image Slicing, Java Roll-Overs, Gif Animation, buttons and Web background designs far more intuitively than Macromedia's FireWorks through visual pre-sets or templates that can be easily changed.

Distributor: Lako Vision
Phone: (03) 9852 7444
Web: www.ulead.com
Price: $199 (upgrade from previous versions $149)

Ease of use: ●●●●◗
Features: ●●●●
Value for money: ●●●●

Kodak DC280

Digital snaps get easier

DIGITAL CAMERAS

***John Hepworth** tests a medium-range digital camera from the Kodak stable.*

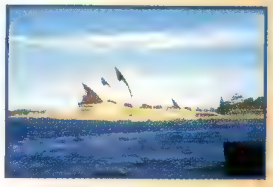
You take the picture — we do the rest. This 100-year-old slogan for the original Kodak box cameras applies just as accurately to the Kodak DC280 digital zoom camera. Ease of use and instinctive controls make operation simpler and easier than with many other digital cameras. At the same time the DC280 has excellent image quality, with its 2-megapixel resolution making sharp A4 prints. The 2x optical zoom and 3x digital zoom are the icing on the cake.

The Kodak DC280 is aimed at a particular type of user: intermediate home and business users who want the quality images from a 2-megapixel camera, and the convenience of a compact camera. It is not aimed at professional photographers or advanced amateurs who need interchangeable lenses or a single lens reflex (SLR) viewfinder. It fully meets the needs of its target audience, is very easy to use, and has great software.

Colour rendition is very good, although skin tones with flash tended to have a just-perceptible magenta cast — easily corrected in photo editing programs. Images are very sharp under almost all conditions, though under extremely bright conditions such as bright sun on a beach, the images are slightly softened. The 2-megapixel CCD makes grain and pixelation almost invisible even in an A4 print.

The optical zoom range is equivalent to a 30mm to 60mm lens on a 35mm film camera. The 3x digital zoom extends this range to have the effect of a 180mm lens on a film camera. The digital zoom does visually reduce image sharpness. The lens retracts into the camera body when not in picture-taking mode.

Sample image at 1x optical zoom.



Sample image at 2x optical zoom.

Sample image at 2x optical and 3x digital zoom.

The DC280 has the general size and shape of a typical pocket camera, although at the larger end of the scale. It fits naturally into the hand and is very comfortable to use. All the controls are well laid out, and their functions are intuitive.

The top deck is uncluttered, with a good layout for controls and the LCD display. The shutter button, located towards the front of the right-hand end of the camera, has a good feel and progressive action. Just to its rear is a rocker zoom switch. Central on the deck is an LCD display, which shows the number of unused pictures at the current resolution, the settings for compression and resolution, flash mode and more. Small buttons on the top deck set flash mode, closeup or distant operation, and self-timer.

The viewfinder eyepiece is near the top of the rear panel. The eyepiece is a little small, and wearers of glasses may find it difficult to use. Located near the top right of the rear panel is the power switch. Towards the bottom of the rear panel is a rotating four-position switch about the size of a 10-cent piece. This selects capture, review, connect, and camera set-up modes.

To the left of the rear panel is the colour LCD screen. This is used for reviewing pictures, as a viewfinder under some circumstances, and for camera setup menus. Control buttons for the LCD and menus are in a very convenient layout around the LCD. The bottom panel of the camera has a wheel for controlling LCD brightness. The LCD is clear and easy to view under almost all lighting conditions.

The left end of the camera has the hatch for the 20Mb memory card, enough for 30 pictures at best resolution and minimum compression. At the lowest resolution and highest compression it can hold 236 photos. Next to the memory card hatch are several I/O connectors. On top is a DC power inlet, and below it is the PAL/NTSC video-out connector. A combined serial and USB port uses separate serial and USB cables for connection to the computer. Transferring 20Mb of images via USB takes less than two minutes.

The DC280 uses four AA batteries, with one set of alkalines and one set of NiMH rechargeables in the pack. Battery life is the weakness of most digital cameras, and the DC280 is no exception. *PC User* had to recharge batteries after a couple of hours of intermittent picture-taking. The camera has a power inlet socket for an AC/DC adapter, however a plugpack is not included in the package.

Distributor: Kodak
Phone: (03) 9350 1222
Web: www.kodak.com
Price: $1699

Ease of use: ●●●●
Image size (pixels): ●●●●●
Image quality: ●●●●
Value for money: ●●●●

MY
MY
MY
MY
MY
The power to Burn.
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Swann Global Express and Message Pro

Choose your modem

MODEMS

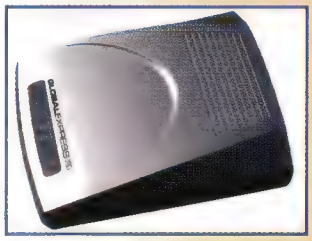
Swann can give you speed or a digital answering machine but not both, as ***John Hepworth*** *discovers.*

Global Express and MessagePro are the latest modem releases from Swann Communications, whose SwannSmart modem won a *PC User* Best Buy in our March issue. As a result, we've been eagerly awaiting the new modems, but we were disappointed.

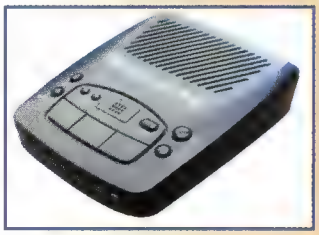
The Global Express has very good performance and bundled accessories, but is let down by indifferent software. In contrast, the MessagePro has a great range of features and good software, but is let down badly by unstable connections and low throughput.

Global Express

The Global Express is a V.90 external modem with voice and fax capabilities, bundled with a headset, microphone, earphone and wheel mouse. It Global Express consistently connected at very good speeds in our tests, and throughput was excellent when downloading files from an ISP. The weakness of the Global Express is the bundled software. The CD has modem drivers and a stack of shareware, including programs needed for the voice and fax functions, a copy of Bitware identified on the CD as shareware, and a 45-day evaluation copy of WinFax Pro. There are no drivers for the wheel mouse; Swann relies on the drivers in Windows 98 for the Microsoft IntelliMouse. Unfortunately, the original release of Windows 95 did not include equivalent drivers, making the wheel useless for that version.



The sleek GlobalExpress was confusing to set up because of the software, but was speedy.



The MessagePro looks like an answering machine, and has Internet performance to match.

Message Pro

The Message Pro is a fully featured V.90 modem with fax and a host of voice features, including built-in, hands-free speakerphone and digital answering machine. The fax and answer machine functions are available whether the computer is on or off, and the Message Pro stores inbound messages and faxes in RAM until the computer is restarted. The advanced features work well and are very valuable in the home and small office, and are supported by powerful and easy-to-use software on the distribution CD.

The software on the CD installed easily and worked well, making it easy to send and receive voice messages and faxes.

Configuring the Message Pro for the Internet connection was more complicated than it should have been. The drivers automatically install in the usual easy Windows manner, but then a manual configuration setting has to be made in the Modem Properties dialog in the Control Panel. This setting is not listed in the brief printed installation leaflet, but is buried in a PDF file on the CD. Unless this setting is correctly made, the fastest connection is less than 33.6Kbps.

Unfortunately, even after making this setting, the Message Pro had very disappointing Internet performance. We were so surprised by the poor performance that we requested a replacement modem. When tested, this had very similar performance to the first. Connect speeds were uneven, ranging from a bit slow to very slow. Connection stability was bad, with more than half the connections being dropped partway through a file transfer. This was on lines where most other modems consistently connect at very high speeds and dropped calls are almost unknown. Where calls were successful, the data transfer rate was about 60% of the speed of the Global Express and other good modems.

Global Express
Price: $229.95
Supplier: Swann Communications
Phone: (03) 9421 2811
Web: www.swann.com.au

Connection speed: ●●●●●
Connection stability: ●●●●●
Data throughput: ●●●●●
Value for money: ●●●●●
Bundled software: ●●●
Bundled accessories: ●●●●●
Voice and fax features: ●●●●

Message Pro
Price: $299
Supplier: Swann Communications
Phone: (03) 9421 2811
Web: www.swann.com.au

Connection speed: ●●●●
Connection stability: ●
Data throughput: ●●●
Value for money: ●
Bundled software: ●●●●●
Voice and fax features: ●●●●●

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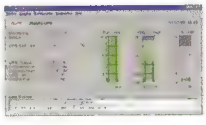

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Job Title: _____
Company: _____
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Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____
How many PCs do you want to protect? _____
How many servers do you want to protect? _____

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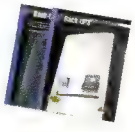

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*Energy Australia, April 1998-March 1999.

Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer

MOUSES

Throw away that mouse pad!

***John Hepworth** thinks Microsoft's new mouse should be the first stop for all new mouse buyers.*

Seven stars out of five! Microsoft's revolutionary IntelliMouse Explorer dramatically changes this basic device. Using optical technology to read mouse movements, it can work on almost any surface and never needs a mousepad. A USB connector and PS/2 adaptor are provided.

At first glance, it looks like an upmarket sculptured mouse with a raised top surface to support the hand. The usual two buttons are near the front edge with a wheel nestled between them in the same position as the original IntelliMouse. On the left-hand side, under the heel of the thumb for right-handed users, are two more programmable buttons. These default to forward and back for a Web browser, but can be programmed easily for many other functions. The shape does, however, make it inconvenient for left-handed users.

This mouse doesn't have a mouse ball, replacing it with a light and a mini digital camera. This takes 1500 pictures per second of a small area under the mouse, then uses a digital signal processor in the mouse to detect movements. The mouse works on almost any flat or curved surface: paper, fabric or desktops. In fact, virtually anything except clear glass! Movement is extremely smooth and precise. You may never need another mouse.

The IntelliMouse Explorer uses a mini camera for precise movement.

Maker: Microsoft
Phone: 132 058
Web: www.microsoft.com
Price: $99.95

Performance: ●●●●●
Value for money: ●●●●●
Overall rating: ●●●●●●●

Acrobat 4.0

WEB PUBLISHING SOFTWARE

Acrobat's latest great act

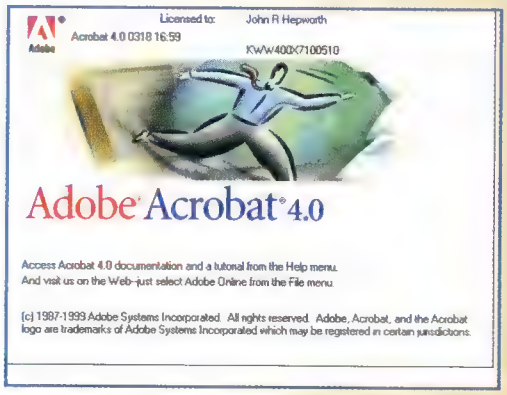
***John Hepworth** finds that Acrobat 4 makes publishing on the Web easier than ever.*

PDF files can be used replace bulky paper manuals. Many Internet and intranet Web sites have PDF files for downloadable brochures, installation guides, process instructions and engineering drawings.

Acrobat Reader is available free from Adobe's Web site or is distributed free on CDs for many programs and can be used to read PDF files. But to make PDF files, you need the full Acrobat 4.0 product. Content from a word processor, spreadsheet, or CAD program can be converted to PDF more simply than ever with Acrobat 4.0. It supports all the classic ways to convert content to PDF, and adds drag and drop, Web capture, OCR and more.

Dragging a Word file and dropping it onto the Acrobat icon on the desktop automatically creates a PDF file. Web capture reads dozens of HTML files and image files from a Web page and creates a PDF file that looks the same as it does in a browser. It even keeps external links intact! OCR reads scanned pages and converts them to PDF.

Acrobat 4.0 is a vital tool for electronic publishing on the Web, CD, or anywhere.



Acrobat 4.0 is easy to use and adds new features.

Maker: Adobe
Phone: (02) 9418 8488
Web: www.adobe.com
Price: $495; upgrade $169

Performance: ●●●●●
Ease of use: ●●●●●
Value for money: ●●●●●

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Comparison

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP performance steadies

***John Hilvert** analyses the latest ISP test results.*

Our latest survey, for the month of August, shows little change from the previous month, with Optus still plagued by poor busy signal performance in Sydney and Melbourne. These figures reveal the likelihood of each ISP being busy, their performance on average modem connect speeds, the speed of downloading Web pages (HTTP) and the speed of file downloads via FTP. If you want fast Web page loads, choose the ISP with the highest HTTP speeds. If you use the Net for downloading the large files, look for the one with the highest FTP performance. For overall reliability and accessibility, look for ISPs with the lowest busy signals and highest average connect speeds.

Our ratings use a five-point scale for each measure; the meanings of each scale will vary and are explained below. We have also calculated an average rating over the four key indicators of busy signals, modem connection speed, HTTP (or Web page download) and FTP.

In Sydney, the overall frontrunners are Big Pond, OzEmail, Connect.com.au and One.Net. In Melbourne, Connect.com.au, Netspace and OzEmail were the picks. Big Pond still suffers from a decline in its busy signal performance, but remains a good bet against other indicators. In Brisbane, all the ISPs, including Big Pond's 150 plan, scored very well this month. Indeed, Big Pond 150 was marginally ahead of the rest.

In Perth, it's a choice between OzEmail, Big Pond and Optus. iiNet recovered from its July decline and is worth going with if it sustains its performance.

In Hobart, Big Pond, Connect and OzEmail all showed low busy signals, but again only mediocre performance.

Our surveys suggest access to Optus is still an issue in Sydney and Melbourne.

ISP TESTS

	Busy signals *	Connect speed **	HTTP speed ***	FTP ***	Average rating
SYDNEY					
Big Pond Home	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
OzEmail	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Connect.com	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
One.Net	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Optus Internet	●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●
TPG	●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●
Magnadata	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
CompuServe	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
MELBOURNE					
Connect.com	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Netspace	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
OzEmail	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Big Pond Home	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Optus Internet	●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●
BRISBANE					
Big Pond 150	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Connect.com	●●●●●	●●●●●	****	●●●●●	●●●●●
OzEmail	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Big Pond Home	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●	●●●●●
Optus Internet	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●	●●●●●
PowerUp	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
PERTH					
Ozemail	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
iiNet	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
Big Pond Home	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
Optus Internet	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
Connect.com	●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Wantree	●●	●●●●●	●●	●	●●●
HOBART					
Big Pond Home	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
Connect.com.au	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
OzEmail	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●
Optus Internet	●●●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●

*Busy signals
●●●●● 0.0-0.5%
●●●● 0.6-2.0%
●●● 2.1-4.0%
●● 4.1-8.0%
● 8.1% or more

** Modem speeds
●●●●● More than 48,000bps
●●●● 38,399-48,000 bps
●●● 33,599-38,400 bps
●● 28,799-33,600bps
● 28,800bps or less

*** HTTP Get and FTP (based on 80% weighting for US sites and 20% Australian sites)
●●●●● 3500bps or more
●●●● 3000-3499bps
●●● 2500-2999bps
●● 2000-2499bps
● Less than 2000bps

**** www.consult experienced difficulties getting a reliable reading for this indicator for this ISP this month.

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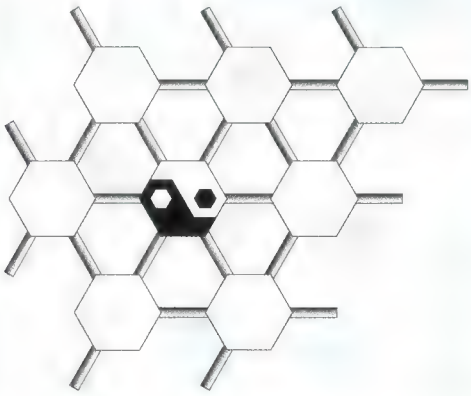


Zeta Internet

www.zeta.org.au **sales@zeta.org.au** **02 9231 9400**

*Additional $45.00 once off setup fee

*Conditions apply

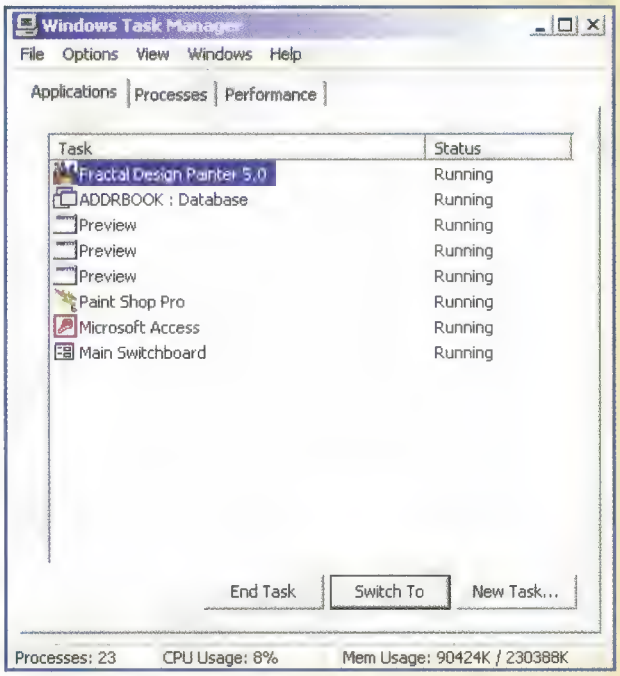
Windows 2000 reality check

Our three experts test out the ambitious new version of Windows. ***Rose Vines*** *finds it lives up to its promises.*

Windows 2000 has been a long time coming. It was originally to be Windows NT 5, the successor to Microsoft's operating system for large companies; then Microsoft decided it would signal an end to the divided corporate/consumer approach it had been using. There would be no more Windows 95/98 or NT, but rather an all-inclusive Windows 2000.

Well, the name's stuck but the focus has changed again. There will be another consumer OS built on Windows 98 and it should appear early in the new millennium. In the meantime, Windows 2000 will be pitched at current NT and high-end Windows 98 users.

What that means for the final product is an operating system that wraps up the strengths of NT — security, reliability, system management and administration, and server-side applications — with the friendliness of Windows 98.



Under Windows 2000 you'll reboot less often, and when you do, you'll find the improved Task Manager is far more reliable than the one in Windows 98.

Out for a spin

I tested a pre-release version of Windows 2000 Professional (the low-end version of the new OS) to see what sort of beast it is and how close it is to being ready to use. I used it as my main system for several weeks, and overall I was very impressed with it.

It spent most of its time running on my old 200MHz Pentium system, which chugs along with 96Mb of RAM, around 6Gb of hard disk space and a hardware complement that I've cobbled together and upgraded mercilessly over the years. Note that this is comfortably beyond the recommended minimum hardware for Win 2000 Professional — a Pentium 166MHz, 32Mb RAM and 500Mb free disk space.

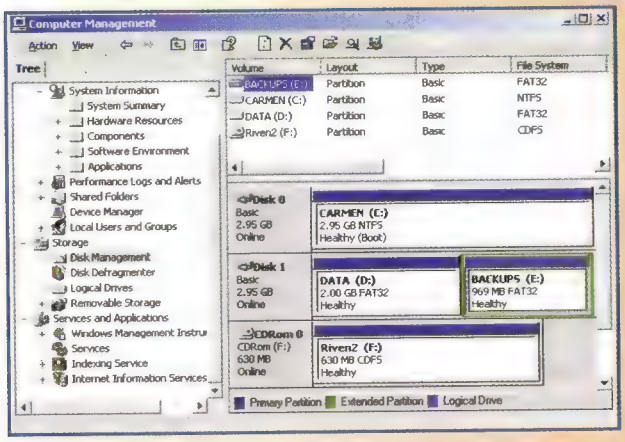
I also loaded it up on a Pentium III 500MHz with 256Mb RAM and some brand-new hardware, including a 3D accelerator and CD-RW drive.

Installation

Installation on both systems was mostly a painless affair. I installed Windows 2000 several times: over Windows NT 4, Windows 95 and Windows 98. The installation proceeded without a hitch each time and the new operating system recognised and worked with almost all the attached hardware; the one exception was my Microsoft IntelliMouse with wheel (see sidebar 'Up from the ashes').

The only other problem I came across was installing Windows 2000 on a newly formatted hard drive. Windows 2000 will install either from the CD-ROM (if your system supports bootable CD-ROMs) or from a set of install floppies. Unfortunately, the Setup program on the CD-ROM only works from within Windows and won't work from a DOS prompt. On a clean hard disk, you're out of luck. It's not a big problem, as you can use the installation disks, but you have to make them yourself and while that's not hard, Win 2000 hides the program you need (makeboot.exe) in the Bootdisk folder and fails to mention it by name. Once I'd overcome that hurdle, installation proceeded apace and, once again, Windows 2000 installed almost flawlessly.

The Programs menu hides programs you rarely use. Rest your cursor on the double-headed arrow at its base for a few seconds and all the installed programs will spring into view.



The computer management console, accessed via the control panel, lets you monitor almost every aspect of your system, including your drives.

Windows 2000 doesn't yet have the extensive support for hardware that comes with Windows 98, but its device support is nevertheless streets ahead of NT's and I was pleasantly surprised by the mixture of old and new hardware that it was capable of dealing with.

Software compatibility

Once it was installed, I set up every bit of software I could find, including some that's given me headaches under Windows 95 and Windows 98. Windows 2000 comes with Internet Explorer 5 built in. To this I added Netscape Communicator 4.61, Office Professional 2000, WordPerfect Suite 2000 Voice Powered Edition, Organizer 5, pcANYWHERE 32 8, Paint Shop Pro 6 Beta 3, Quake II, Midtown Madness, Trophy Bass 3D, Painter 5, around 20 of my favourite utilities, and a selection of old DOS programs as well.

None of these caused Windows 2000 any problems. It performed faultlessly both when running programs on their own and running multiple programs simultaneously. To my surprise, it ran the DOS programs more efficiently than Windows 98, flipping into full-screen DOS mode and handling graphics and text beautifully.

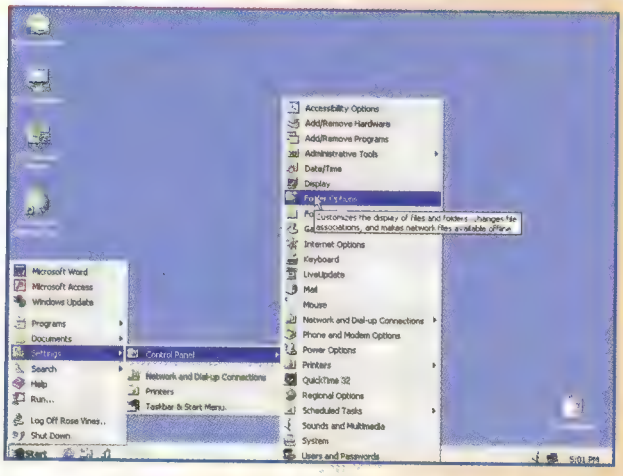
Finally, I tried to make it fall over by installing Cyan's Riven (the sequel to Myst) and Sierra's Lighthouse. Neither of these games have ever worked on my pieced-together Pentium 200. The sound and video have always been out of sync, no matter what troubleshooting measures and drivers I've tried, and however much I played with and changed various hardware components. Under Windows 2000, they ran without a single video glitch or sound hiccup.

The only problems I encountered were when I linked up my two PCs, one running Windows 2000 and the other running Windows 98. I first used pcANYWHERE 32 and attempted to connect the two via a direct parallel cable connection. It turns out pcANYWHERE doesn't support parallel connections under Windows NT and, hence, under Windows 2000. I ended up using a serial cable instead, which worked fine but was unbearably slow.

I then connected the two using an Ethernet LAN. This was much more successful; both operating systems recognised the LAN cards, and Windows 2000 did so with considerably more finesse than Windows 98. The only problem was the configuration of network settings, which is entirely different under the two operating systems. Windows 2000 offers two alternatives — workgroup or domain — but the help system assumes that you're a system adminstrator and it's full of circular references. Moral: if you're going to install a mixed operating system network, make sure knowledgeable help is at hand, and check carefully before you buy one of the new wireless, power outlet or phone line LANs, as many of them won't work with mixed operating systems.

Performance and reliability

Windows 2000 will soak up every bit of hardware you throw at it. Its performance ranged from sluggish to adequate on my Pentium 200. Boot-up time was about the same as under Windows 98, shutdown time was slower (the system does some useful reliability work in the background, so I don't begrudge the time it takes) and general performance was largely similar



Windows 2000 does away with desktop clutter (until you create your own). All the controls and settings you need are available in the much-enhanced Control Panel, and pop-up Tooltips inform you of the purpose of each program.

to Windows 98. I made sure I turned off little extras such as fade-in effects on menus and windows (adjusted via the Control Panel, Display, Effects setting), which are cute but slow.

On the Pentium III 500, it was a dream. Everything rocketed along at least as fast as under Windows 98 and often faster.

On both systems, Windows 2000 was noticeably more reliable than Windows 98 Second Edition. Despite loading up a dozen or so programs at once and pushing them to their limits, I never had to resort to a reboot of the Windows 2000 system. When I tested terminating a program using Windows 2000's Task Manager (accessible through a Ctrl+Alt+Del dialog that also contains options to lock the computer, shutdown or logout), I found the procedure more efficient and positive than Windows 98's somewhat haphazard implementation.

I also noticed that while Windows 98's Internet performance slowed down after the installation of the LAN, Windows 2000's performance was unhindered.

Ease of use

Welcome boxes and messages greet new users and point them in the right direction, and help bubbles appear to tell you the purpose of various features. There's a better Find feature, shared history links in Windows Explorer and Internet Explorer, and easy-to-get-at troubleshooting wizards. You can control everything from folder options to network administration to disk defragmentation via the highly centralised control panel. These can be a nuisance to experienced users, so you might have to spend some time turning off the friendly features.

Windows 2000 time?

Should you upgrade? If your computer just scrapes into the recommended settings, the answer is no, stick with your current operating system. You shouldn't install Windows 2000 Professional on a system with anything less than a Pentium II 300MHz with 64Mb (preferably 128Mb) RAM and a large hard disk. If you're a games freak or perpetual hardware upgrader, you, too, will do better to stick with Windows 98, which offers unbeatable hardware support and is first out with drivers for the latest gizmos.

If you're a power user and your hardware is supported by Windows 2000 (Microsoft has a compatibility list on its Windows 2000 site, www.microsoft.com/windows/professional/default.asp), the answer is yes. Windows 2000 gives you the chance to poke your fingers into all sorts of settings and get yourself networked at the same time as delivering most of Windows 98's best features. The answer is also yes if you have a small office full of machines you want to network, particularly if they are all upgradable to Windows 2000.

The last word: In Windows 2000 I found the solution to some longstanding problems. For my setup, at least, it's worth the upgrade. Whether or not it's a good idea for you depends on your processor, your propensity for playing with games and hardware, and your networking needs.

Performance: ●●●
Robustness: ●●●●●
Compatibility: ●●●●
Overall value: ●●●●

UP FROM THE ASHES

A small case of operator error allowed me to test one of Windows 2000's smart new life-saving features.

The operating system has built-in support for wheel mice but that support doesn't include programming the wheel button, one of the most useful features. I decided to get around this by installing the Microsoft IntelliMouse driver from the floppy. When I did so, Windows 2000 warned me that I might be about to cause hardware incompatibilities and did I really want to continue? Like an idiot I said yes, go right ahead.

Disaster! I was told to reboot and when I did, neither the mouse nor the keyboard would respond. I was locked out. So I rebooted once more, hit F8 to bring up the boot menu and chose Safe Mode Windows, a route that gets around most hardware lockups. To no avail. The mouse and keyboard remained totally unresponsive.

At this stage, under Windows 95/98, most of us would be looking at an operating system reinstallation, but here's where Windows 2000 showed its colours. I rebooted once more, hit F8 and chose the Last Known Good Configuration option. Phoenix-like, Windows 2000 started without a problem, tossing out my fatal mouse setting and restoring my system to its pre-mouse state.

SNY0464/PCU Foster Nunn Loveder

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Windows 2000: not worth it

***Darren Yates** does the reality check and decides it's not worth upgrading to 2000 yet.*

My first thoughts when Windows 2000 was released were: hooray! At long last we have an operating system that brings the best of Windows 98 and Windows NT 4.0 together. I'd been waiting for some time for this to arrive, so when I loaded up my copy of RC1 (Release Candidate 1) onto my trusty home-built 550MHz Pentium III, I was expecting great things.

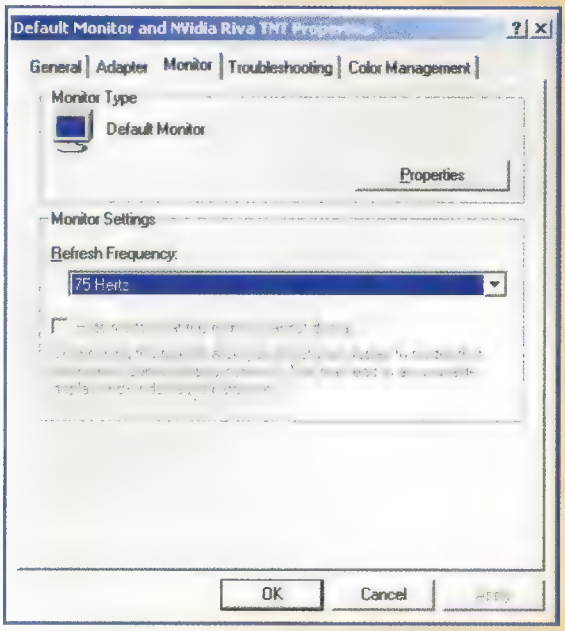
One of the major problems with Windows 98 is that it is still essentially a 16-bit operating system and, in that respect, it's more suited to Intel's now old and crusty Pentium-MMX chips.

Don't get me wrong, Windows 98 is the most feature-rich operating system Microsoft has come up with, but it doesn't allow Pentium II, Celeron and Pentium III processors to stretch out in top gear. Windows 2000, on the other hand, is built on Windows NT technology, which means it's fully 32-bit. Windows NT 4.0 has long been the best option for more recent processors, giving as much as 40% more performance on everyday office applications over Windows 98. The problem is that it's a shocker for games. However, now that Windows 2000 includes improved DirectX support and plug and play, it offers all the advantages of both operating systems — well, that's what I started out thinking.

Bigger hard drive please

I installed Windows 2000 on to a freshly formatted 3.2Gb Quantum Fireball hard disk drive. No real dramas here, although it's by no means quick. Even with a 40X CD-ROM drive, it still took about 45 minutes to install from start to finish, but when you find out just how much stuff it's loaded onto the drive, it's not surprising. By the time I loaded Windows 2000 and Office 2000, there was no change from 1Gb of hard disk drive space. Now, I like having all the features, but a whole gigabyte of hard disk drive space? Despite its 650Mb slurp of the space, Windows 2000 does seem to be more stable; put it this way, I didn't have a system crash in the two weeks I used it. In that time, Windows 98 would have carked it on me at least three times.

Windows 2000 needs better IDE CD-ROM support for audio data extraction.



You no longer need a plug and play monitor to change the screen refresh rate.

What I do like about Windows 2000 is its ability to be tweaked easily. Although you can do things fairly easily in Windows 98, it's better in 2000. It also has an updated driver list, so it recognised the nVidia Riva TNT graphics chipset as well as the Sound Blaster AudioPCI soundcard, without me having to find the driver software, which is a real bonus. I enjoy tweaking things around and Windows 2000 is a godsend for those who just can't leave well enough alone. What I don't like is the fact that Windows Explorer is now tucked away in the Accessories tab rather than in the main Start menu. And I really hate the fact that you can't seem to turn off the Web page look when you run Explorer.

The trouble is that Microsoft has changed too many little things that you're used to being the norm in earlier operating systems. As a result, it's not as easy to use, regardless of whether you come from Windows 98 or NT 4.0. There's no

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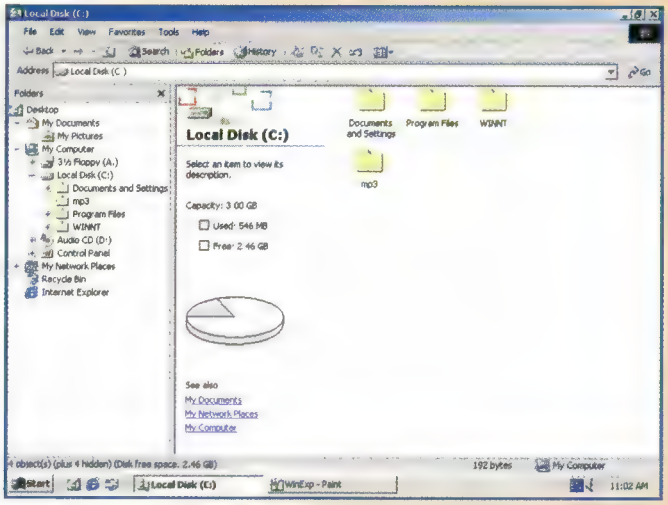

Not being able to turn off the Web page look easily is a disadvantage.

more DOS mode either; there is a command line screen but it's not the same thing.

Quake II needs help

The first minor application problem I ran into was installing Quake II. I know, it's not your typical business-oriented application but hey, it should still work. At first, Windows 2000 sets itself up as if it's in US mode, but once the system was converted to Australian settings, Quake II installed with no problems. The game started OK, but trying to get the OpenGL driver to work appeared fruitless; each time I selected it, RC1 would revert to the slow software mode. Despite RC1 recognising the nVidia Riva TNT graphics chip integrated onto the motherboard, it didn't have the driver software required to allow Quake II to run using OpenGL so, using the 'when in doubt, jump onto the Internet' rule, I downloaded the latest driver software from nVidia's Web site.

Once the NT version of Detonator 2.08 was loaded, Quake II kicked into gear and handled the 'timedemo 1' with an average frame rate of 63.9 frames per second. That was OK but the same test on the same machine with Windows 98 gave me 77.1 frames per second, so I wouldn't say Windows 2000 was the choice if you're planning to save the world from all manner of foes.

I'm also a mad-keen audio fanatic and one thing I did find annoying was that I couldn't extract the audio from audio compact discs any more. (And yes, they were my audio files, ©1999 Darren Yates.)

The shareware tools I had been using no longer worked. In fact, none of the ripping software (extracting data from audio CDs into editable WAV files) that worked so well under Windows 98 would even think about doing the job under Windows 2000. I don't think this is a clandestine patch included by Microsoft in Windows 2000 to prevent ripping, but it certainly lacks the ability that Windows 98 has. The reason for the fault appears to be a lack of driver software for allowing the CD-ROM drive to extract raw audio data from the disc, which is strange because Microsoft has added DVD support and a cool new CD player. As far as Internet access goes, Windows 2000 has provided nothing of note. It booted, connected and ran, although I must admit I don't run too many tweaks here. Internet Explorer and Outlook both performed as usual.

The new networking advantage is the inclusion of Microsoft's Internet connection-sharing utility, which allows Internet access to be shared across a small network of PCs. It works in virtually the same manner as the version on Windows 98 Second Edition.

Seems slower

Despite running it on a 550MHz Pentium III, things don't seem to happen quickly, particularly when I used a new feature for the first time. Microsoft has been saying for a while that you need at least a 300MHz processor and 64Mb of RAM to get going with Windows 2000. I'm tempted to think that 128Mb of RAM will be the point at which things really kick into gear.

I tried to benchmark this machine using Windows 2000, but I had no luck when it came to getting the Ziff-Davis' Business Winstone 99 benchmark suite to complete the tests correctly, despite loading up the patch that supposedly fixed Windows 2000 compatibility problems.

2000 will cause many people to look at their hard disk drives and think seriously about an upgrade.

The bottom line

Windows 2000 is certainly not the best choice for the average consumer. I doubt that the average home PC, unless it was bought this year, would have the muscle to make a serious go of it. Even for a PC enthusiast, the gains over Windows 98 are marginal and you lose an extra 300Mb of disk space as well.

As I see it, an operating system should suck up no more than a tenth of your hard disk drive space, so unless you've got at least a 6.4Gb drive under the bonnet, you're better off sticking with Windows 98, particularly if you're a keen gamer.

The last word: Nope, I think I'll give Windows 2000 a miss, at least until we've seen two service packs appear on the *PC User* cover CD! A major disadvantage for anyone thinking about installing 2000 is its sheer size of it.

Performance: ●●●
Robustness: ●●●●
Compatibility: ●●
Overall value: ●●

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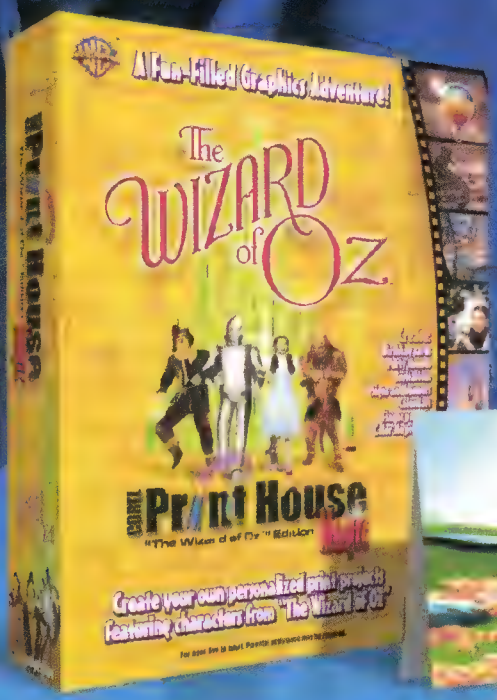

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Windows 2000: it's rubbish!

***Jan Wikström** slams the new Windows effort.*

Ah yes, reality. Cold, hard and cruel is reality. That's not how it was supposed to be, though; this article was meant to be the result of a week or so of using Windows 2000 in my daily work, concentrating on its usefulness as a home system.

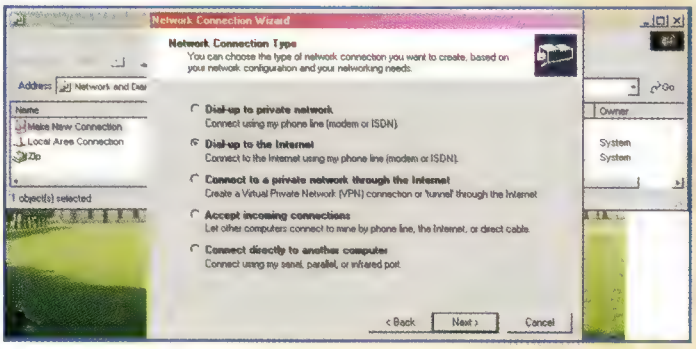
The first impression was a lasting one: after hours of trying to make the darn Release Candidate 1 (RC1) of Windows 2000 Professional install on my brand-new system — not trying to make it work, just trying to install it — I was left with a strong wish to keep Win2k off my desk. To give you the background, my new system is nothing flash or unusual: just a nice, middle-of-the-road Pentium III/450.

The Windows 2000 RC1 CD gives you two options: a clean Windows 2000 installation in its own partition with dual booting, or an irrevocable update that includes removing the existing system. It would not allow installation from DOS mode, which is a pity, as I could then have installed it on a blank hard disk. So I installed Windows 98 SE on the new system, tested it and set up the basics, including networking and dial-up networking, which went without a hitch.

I tried the dual-boot option first, as I didn't want to do anything irrevocable right away. The installer checked out the hardware and found nothing to complain about except the Sound Blaster, for which it had no compatible drivers — but it did say: all right, if you absolutely have to, go ahead and install, but you'll have to do without sound.

Well, that seemed a small and temporary sacrifice, so I went ahead. The installer checked out the system files and declared itself happy, then copied a lot of files across and rebooted. This involved a boot menu, giving me the option to boot Windows 98 or 2000. So far, so good; the installer announced that it was about to restart in Windows 2000 — and froze the system stiff.

When in doubt, read the instructions. Well, buried three-quarters of the way through the 37,000 words of release notes, most of which was taken up with NT workarounds concerning mind-numbing corporate networking and database stuff I'd never heard about, was a casual mention that the installation hangs in DOS mode if the machine has a Novell NE2000 network adaptor with its I/O address set to 340h. Guess what . . . The thing that really annoys me about this is that the NE2000 is listed as tested and fully compatible in the hardware compatibility list on the CD, which I checked carefully before starting. There was no mention of the port setting business.



These are the main networking options other than LAN. Four are features you can choose not to install in Windows 98 if you don't need them; the fifth is not available.

NT by any other name

All right, so I pulled the networking card, got the thing installed, bunged the card in again and everything was working just fine. Win2K resides in its own 1Gb partition. Plenty of space, you might think — but not in this case. The first time I looked, it had taken up about 850Mb, and after a couple of starts it pruned some of itself off by some arcane automatic process and wound up occupying 686Mb. That's better than 850, but it's still far too much. So what does this vast, wobbling lump of bloatware offer to make us prefer it over Windows 98 SE (itself pretty stout at 231Mb)?

The immediately obvious difference when you start the configuration work is a bewildering array of networking options, clearly reflecting the NT ancestry of Win2K — in fact, little things like the default folder name WINDOWS NT and the version number 5.00.2072 leave a clear impression that this is a rebadged NT5 and, as such, it's perfectly fitted for the corporate desktop where a professional network administrator can manage its powerful, complex corporate networking, security and management features. On the SOHO desk, nearly all these things are as useful as skates on a camel and serve only to bewilder the home user.

Setting up for networking has been unified into one set of options, which is logical and very handy for an expert, but maybe a little forbidding for a new chum who only wants to get on to the Internet, as you can no longer deal with DUN on its own, but have to find it from five different options (not including LAN variations). The arrogant stupidity of the Windows 98 SE DUN wizard is still alive and well: when you want to set up a

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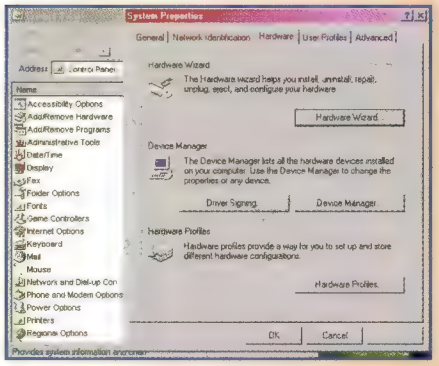

Several Control Panel items have been rolled into the system properties applet — but, confusingly, they remain on the Control Panel as well.

DUN (dial-up networking) connection, there are three radio button options: sign up for a new connection, transfer an existing account and set up manually.

Well, as I have an existing ISP connection, 'transfer an existing account to this computer' is the option I chose. The wizard then forces you to dial up a Microsoft number to get a referral to 'an ISP in your area'. Why, for heaven's sake? Does Microsoft think I don't know who my existing ISP is? To add insult to insult, the MS online referral service then wastes a telephone call by informing you that 'it knows of no ISP in your area'. Yeah, right, the (02) area is famous for having no ISPs. After putting you through all of this, the wizard deigns to allow you to set up an ISP connection by hand. At least that worked.

Perhaps what the prompt really meant was 'transfer an existing account to another ISP', but that's not what it said. If so, it didn't work, and if it's too confusing for an old hand like me, what chance does a new chum have?

Wottle she do?

And once Win2k is running, what impression does it give? To begin with, the slowness of the graphics stand out. I have a very simple test for this: run a Solitaire game to its conclusion. The jumping cards in the final display give a good, rough indication of 2D graphic animation performance. On the same machine running Windows 98 SE, the bouncing cards display runs to completion in 3.55 seconds; under Win2K it took 5.2 seconds, which is about one-third longer. OK, that's no surprise — we know that NT, due to its extra security, handles graphics more slowly. But it's not going to endear Win2K to the game players among us, and they're a majority among home users. By the way, if you want to do this test yourselves, make sure you run the same version of Solitaire — the new one that comes with Win2K has had the bouncing card display slowed right down.

Wow, look at that!

So what does Microsoft do when the system is slow in the graphics department? Why, load it down with more graphical gewgaws, of course. Not only does Win2K display a drop shadow under the cursor, but in addition to the animated menus and boxes (now called 'scroll effect') you can now have a fade-in and fade-out effect. That's right — just like the scroll effect, the fade effect involves delaying everything for a few seconds so we can enjoy the wonderful graphical sophistication. Fortunately, this nonsense can be turned off.

As for appearance, the graphical user interface of Windows 2000 is otherwise the same as that of Windows 98 SE, including the excellent quick launch bar. Internet Explorer 5 and Outlook Express 5 are included in the same way as in Windows 98.

The default interface mode is the confusing one, as it's tricky to tell if you're dealing with a file on your own machine, on a network or on some site out there in Internet Land. And the default desktop mode is still that marvellously intelligent one that enables you to put a continuously updated Web page where it's covered by the programs you're working in and can't be seen. However, I didn't find it difficult to get rid of the excess baggage and get Win2K to perform nearly as well as 98 SE.

And what of the vaunted stability? I dare say it exists — NT is supposed to resist the machinations of bad programs better than Windows 98, although it would take a longer test period to make sure. I did cause it to fall over once by running the wrong version of RegClean, but it succeeded in repairing itself. This can't be a bad thing, but the price you pay is that there are a lot of Windows and DOS programs you can't run at all.

I'm not happy about the fact that the most useful system maintenance tools in Windows 98 — System Information, System File Checker and RegClean — are absent. All right, this is only a release candidate, but its features are supposed to be complete. Let's hope Microsoft comes to its senses and at least includes these tools in the Resource Kit (which is supposed to come with Release Candidate 2). I couldn't find the Clipboard Viewer either.

One positive point about the NT ancestry of Win2k: Windows Fax is integrated into the system and uses the same address book as Outlook Express 5.

On the home desk

When it finally comes down to the usefulness of Windows 2000 on a home system, it's much too big, it's slow, it refuses to run many DOS and Windows games and it lacks the best system maintenance tools.

SOHO is not what NT5 (oops, I mean Windows 2000 Professional) was intended for. It's a power user system for the corporate environment, where security and reliability are the main concerns. As such, it's unsuitable for the home environment in much the same way that a tipping semi-trailer is great for hauling 25 tonnes of sand but rather inconvenient for going shopping.

The last word: Not for the home user. The networking options are too complex unless you're an expert, and connecting to your ISP is downright confusing. It's too big and the graphics are slow, although I'm prepared to concede it's probably stable.

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Robustness: ●●●
Compatibility: ●●●
Overall value: ●●

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The Essential 433c from Gateway is the best PC we have seen for under $2000. It certainly offers a number of features we haven't seen before from a brand-name sub-$2000 PC, including a 17in monitor and DVD-ROM drive. You would have expected to pay well over $2500 for this at the beginning of the year. With a roomy 6.8Gb hard disk drive, 64Mb of RAM and Intel's 433MHz Celeron processor, most applications will scream on this system. It has all the bases covered, with Sound Blaster AudioPCI 64D sound controller and good-quality Boston Acoustic BA735s speakers, making it an ideal unit not only for business but also a very good home entertainment PC. The only drawback is the 8Mb AGP graphics card, but even so, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better value box. Gateway also offers a three-year parts and labour warranty and lifetime phone support.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $1999
Distributor: Gateway
Contact: 1800 500 338
URL: www.gw2k.com.au

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Multi-dimensional

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13.6Gb hard disk drive and a fine 17in display. Backed up by an original nVidia Riva TNT 3D graphics controller, it will also give you excellent gameplay. It comes with DVD-ROM drive and dynamic Altec Lansing ADA880 digital surround speakers. Add to that Creative's Sound Blaster Live! soundcard and you'll have sound from all directions. It also features a built-in 56K modem. The T550 provides the best all-round level of features and performance at a knockout price. It's also backed by a three-year limited parts and warranty.

Judge: Darren Yates

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Gateway Solo 2500LS

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The 4.3Gb hard disk drive is as good as you'll get for $3000. It also has the advantage of being quite fast. It includes Windows 98 SE and Microsoft's Works Suite 99, and two USB and PC card slots to hook up just about anything you can

think of. With an all-up weight (including battery, CD-ROM drive and AC adaptor) of just over 3kg, it's not going to break your back.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $2999
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ROM drive, you have a portable home entertainment system ready to go. The DVD-ROM drive can also read CD-R and CD-RW discs. Add in a 6Gb hard disk drive and integrated 56K modem and this is also the ideal unit for any small office or home office. Battery life is greater than two-and-a-half hours, matching the majority of models on the market. It's also backed by a one-year international warranty. There are higher-powered notebooks on the market that compete in this price range, but as an all-round, feature-rich package, this is the one to choose.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $4500
Distributor: Toshiba Australia
Contact: 1800 021 100
URL: www.toshiba.com.au

Compaq Aero 8000

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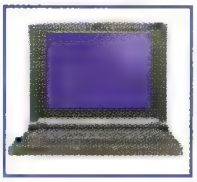
Compact winner

Where Windows CE does make plenty of sense is inside the new generation of portables. Are they subnotebooks or sumo handhelds? Who cares, when you can run it all day without recharging, use a capable if cut-down set of Office and Internet applications on a colour screen, enjoy instant power-on and get online with a built-in 56K modem — and all under 1.5kg in weight and $2000 in price?



Compaq, Hewlett-Packard and Sharp each offer a Windows CE subnote. Microsoft's standard floorplan for what it terms 'Jupiter-class' CE machines means they've all got Pocket Office and Pocket Internet Explorer software, PC card support, at least 16Mb of memory and easy data exchange with your Windows 9x desktop.

Compaq's Aero 8000 pulls ahead on the strength of its extra features. The built-in SmartCard reader and remote network connectivity software appeal mainly to road warriors. The 10in screen (appreciably larger than the rest), 128MHz powerplant and pair of SmartMedia card slots for boosting memory or backing up your work should please students and casual users for whom heavy, pricey Windows 9x notebooks are overkill.

Judge: David Flynn

Price: $1999
Distributor: Compaq Australia
Contact: 1300 368 369
URL: www.compaq.com.au

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Infinity in the palm

It's been a frenetic year for handhelds. Big names — from the likes of 3Com, IBM, Compaq, HP, Philips and of course the Big M itself — poured hundreds of millions into the campaign. Who ever would have thought a few square inches of real estate in your shirt pocket or purse would be so valuable?

My pick of the bunch turned out to be the cheapest and most unassuming: the Palm IIIe. Like the rest of the Palm family, and at odds with high-end Windows CE handhelds, it forgoes a colour display for a crisp and well-defined mono-screen (the same panel used in the Palm IIIx and V).

The 2Mb of memory may not be expandable, but it's more than enough for the average user to store thousands of names, addresses, appointments and notes, as well as your choice of the wealth of Palm applets available on the Web. As it's built on the foundations of the Palm III series, there are plenty of hardware accessories too, while the see-through plastic case is a bonus for those who value geek chic.

The Windows CE handhelds have more features but they're also much bigger, more expensive and lack the elegant simplicity of the Palm IIIe. This offering proves that less can indeed be more.

Judge: David Flynn

Price: $449
Distributor: 3Com/Palm Computing Australia
Contact: 1300 360 558
URL: www.palm.com.au

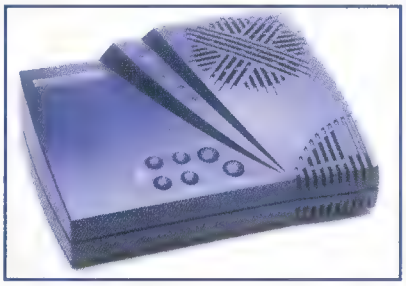
3Com US Robotics 56K V.90 External Professional Message Modem

BEST MODEM

Swiss army knife

Most people who have a PC want an Internet connection as well, and for that you need a modem.

There are plenty of modems which have the basic ability to connect to an ISP at 56K. The 3Com US Robotics 56K V.90



External Professional Message Modem adds a host of extra features to ISP connectivity, and in many ways it's the Swiss army knife of modems.

Internet connectivity starts with two 56K standards — the older X2 and the current V.90 used by almost all ISPs. Fax send and receive is also provided, eliminating the need for a traditional fax machine at home or in a small office. Caller ID identifies the source of an inbound call before it is answered. If a distinctive ring is enabled on the phone line, the different ring patterns for each number can be detected and the modem will only answer calls intended for it.

The 3Com US Robotics 56K V.90 External Professional Message Modem can be used as a hands-free telephone. Its answering machine function is available whether the computer is on or off, storing inbound messages in memory within the modem.

Judge: John Hepworth

Price: $256
Distributor: 3Com
Contact: (02) 9937 5000
URL: www.3com.com

P-POP is unique to Canon.

ESS · STOP PRESS · STOP PRESS · STO

New BJC-7100 has even more refined PhotoRealism, 25 tonal levels and the

plain paper advantage.

And that's only part of the story.

Because the BJC™-7100 also features water-fast printing, even on postcard type stock, is significantly faster than its predecessor in B&W and up to three times faster for photo quality colour.

But, like all Canon high definition Professional Resolution printers, the story begins with quality.

7-colour process. The BJC-7100 has a seven-colour printing process using both conventional CMYK inks, and lower density CMY inks, plus a new image processing system. The result is not self-styled "photo-printing," but a unique Canon PhotoRealism™ process.

More sophisticated colour in 25 tonal levels. The inks can be mixed and layered to produce up to 25 tonal levels with up to 90 times the colour combinations of traditional CMYK inks. The result is finer colour gradations, richer dark tones and hard to produce light shades are virtually free of pixelisation. So high quality paper produces images that are almost indistinguishable from photographic prints.

Professional Resolution
Ultra-High Definition.

Better plain paper performance. Then there is P-POP (Plain Paper Optimised Printing), a process unique to the new BJC-7100. It bonds an invisible Ink Optimiser to the paper before inks are applied. The inks, in turn, bond to the optimiser. Plain paper text and lines are better defined, colours are more vibrant, tones are sharper, and print-outs become virtually water fast.

P-POP™ Water Resistance

Better paper handling, full bleed A4. Better plain paper use can obviously lower operating costs. It accepts virtually all paper types from plain to high gloss photo paper, has the ability to print full-bleed A4 and even accepts card-stocks at paper-weights up 550 gsm (0.8MM).

Canon Customer Care. All Canon printers feature a one-year warranty, upgrade-able to three years for minimal cost, and are backed by Customer Care hot-line support. Drivers are available for Windows® 3.1x/95/98.

If you need high definition PhotoRealism, even on plain paper, you need the P-POP advantage. To learn more about the new BJC-7100, call us on 1 800 021 167.

PhotoRealism™

New BJC-7100 – $599RRP

Canon

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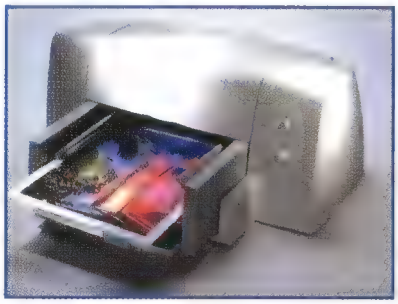
Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 695C

BEST INKJET PRINTER UNDER $300

All-round print quality

The DeskJet 695C offers overall quality and reliability at a very reasonable price. HP has always been a master of text quality and the 695C's 600dpi (dots per inch) text is faultless in this area — it's every bit as good as a laser printer, even on plain paper. While there are one or two units that offer higher resolution for under $300, this one does the best job on plain paper and that's what counts. The 695C is a dual-cartridge, four-colour design, which means you don't have to swap one for the other to handle both mono and colour printing. There's also an optional photo cartridge kit available for improved photo colour. It has a super-economy mode and improved driver software for Windows 3.1, 95 and NT



4.0. Given that even at $300 you still have to make some compromises, this printer offers you the best value for your money.

Judge: Darren Yates

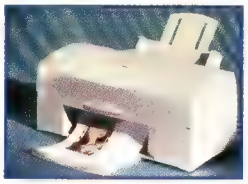
Price: $249
Distributor: Hewlett-Packard Australia
Contact: 131 347
URL: www.hp.com.au

Canon BJC-7100

BEST INKJET PRINTER UNDER $500

Seven colours

At $500, your options start to open up, but you need to look for as much resolution and as many colours as you can, and that's what this offers. The only seven-colour printer in this price range, it does good text printing and excels in photo-quality colour printing, particularly on high-gloss paper. Even on plain paper, Canon's P-POP does a fair job. Its top resolution of 1200 by 600dpi and seven colours mean the BJC-7100 can capture tones that other printers can't. It offers a speed of eight pages per minute for monochrome and five for colour. Photo images come out a bit faint but the driver software should fix that. It doesn't have a USB connection, but it will still work with just about any PC you throw at it. Overall, this is the best printer you'll get for your $500.



Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $499
Distributor: Canon Australia
Contact: 1800 021 167
URL: www.canon.com.au

Epson Stylus Color 900

BEST INKJET PRINTER UNDER $800

Stylish

This was hard to choose, but the speed, colour quality and versatility of this unit won out. With 1440 by 720dpi printing, it produces very good photo-image results on high-grade paper, and its speed makes it a winner. With up to 12 pages per minute (monochrome) printing, it's the fastest under $800. It also sports three connection interfaces: standard parallel port, Macintosh serial and

USB. The USB port works with either Windows 98 or Mac OS. You can also network this printer, making it suitable for business use.

Judge: Darren Yates

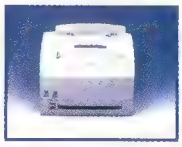
Price: $779
Distributor: Epson Australia
Contact: (02) 9903 9000
URL: www.epson.com.au

Canon LBP-660

BEST LASER PRINTER UNDER $500

Budget laser

Time has brought the very likeable Canon LBP-660 under the $500 price mark. Its main feature is that it hits the 600dpi/six-pages-per-minute criteria. It struggles a little to print some photo-grade images, but its text quality is as good as you can expect from a 600dpi printer. It's also quite compact and comes with software for Windows 3.1 and 95/98. The dual paper trays have capacity for up to 100 standard A4 pages and allows for face-up or face-down printing. It also uses less power in standby mode. For laser printing on the tightest budget, this is the model to look at.



Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $499
Distributor: Canon Australia
Contact: 1800 021 167
URL: www.canon.com.au

1440 DPI, Drop Modulation Technology

and Individual Ink Tanks.

If you demand speed, quality and economy from your printer, look no further than the new Canon BJC™-6000.

New see-through ink tanks. What really distinguishes the BJC-6000 is the new ink tank system. For better operating economy there are individual see-through ink tanks for all colours. Each is separate from the print heads, significantly reducing operating costs and allowing you to replace only the empty tank.

The think tank system. Each ink tank has a prism moulded into the bottom. A beam of light measures ink status, and a monitor in the printer driver keeps users up to date on the amount of ink remaining in each cartridge.

More life-like colour. An all-new driver emphasises colours as they are perceived by the human eye. The result is natural colours with more subtle variations in dark shaded regions, and better gradations in highlighted areas. PhotoRealism with a six-colour ink system and Drop Modulation further enhance quality, even on plain paper.

1440 X 720 dpi. Drop Modulation Technology™ generates droplets around one-third the size of conventional droplets giving you high resolution printing at 1440 X 720 dpi. The result is a sharper image with smoother tonal gradations.

Sharper Black Text. Drop Modulation Technology is now available for the first time with a black cartridge to help eliminate grain in text. At the same time newly developed black ink gives sharper, clearer text with improved water resistance.

New, high-performance engine. An innovative new engine design provides the fastest print speeds, in both black & white and colour, of any Canon Bubble Jet printer.

Canon Customer Care. All Canon printers feature a one-year warranty, upgradeable to three years for minimal cost, and are backed by Customer Care hot-line support. Drivers are available for Windows® 95/98/NT and an optional USB conversion kit is available with drivers for Windows 98, iMac and Mac G3.

If you are looking for performance and economy, you've found it in the new BJC-6000. For more information please call us on 1 800 021 167.

Photo Realism™

New BJC-6000 – $549RRP

Canon

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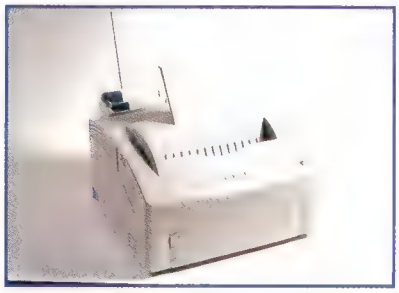
CS/8259

Lexmark Optra E310

BEST LASER PRINTER UNDER $1000

Quiet achiever

Lexmark is one of the quieter achievers, but the Optra E310 is certainly a printer to make plenty of noise about. With up to 1200dpi print quality and a print engine speed that hits eight pages per minute, the E310 is the ideal combination of quality and speed. It also sports both standard parallel printer and USB ports and comes with drivers for both Windows and Mac OS. Of the personal laser printers I've seen, the E310 has the best combination of text and image quality, particularly the image quality, which is far superior to many of the printers on the market at the moment. It includes 2Mb of RAM, but this can be expanded to 66Mb, so it is designed to handle high-definition desktop publishing files. It comes with software on CD-ROM and includes



PostScript Level 2 drivers — one of the few laser printers under $1000 to do so, making this the ideal choice for a home desktop publishing business. Overall, there might be some more attractive competition, but the print quality of the Optra E310 makes it a clear winner.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $936
Distributor: Lexmark Australia
Contact: 1300 362 192
URL: www.lexmark.com/ap

Kodak DC215 Millennium

BEST DIGITAL CAMERA UNDER $1000

Smile, please

The DC215 provides the best bang-per-buck for under $1000, offering the best features and resolution you'll find in this price range. For starters, there are 1152 by 864 pixels to capture your favourite images. The kit includes an 8Mb

Kodak Picture card, capable of storing up to 26 high-quality, high-resolution images or up to 115 images with 640 by 840-pixel resolution. You can use the rear 1.8in TFT LCD for a through-the-lens view as well as reviewing your images. This model also includes a USB card reader, which enables you to download your images to your PC in QuickTime. The lens is a true 2X optical-zoom glass lens and has a wide f/4.79 to f/16 aperture range. It supports Windows 95, 98 and NT 4.0 as well as Apple Power Macintosh systems. Overall, with megapixel CCD resolution, zoom lens and fast USB card reader, the DC215 Millennium is a winner.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $920
Distributor: Kodak Australia
Contact: 1800 333 194
URL: www.kodak.com.au

Sony MVC-FD83

BEST DIGITAL CAMERA UNDER $2000

Snap-happy

Sony has always taken technology to extremes and it's done it again with the MVC-FD83. The unit takes high-resolution images and deposits them directly onto 3.5in floppy disks and can capture up to 60 seconds of MPEG video. Top resolution is 1216 by 912 pixels enhanced and you can store up to eight fine-definition images on a 1.44Mb disk. It also includes zoom capabilities with a 3X-optical and 6X-digital zoom, and uses lithium-ion

rechargeable batteries, giving you up to two hours' video or 1200 still images from a single charge. Add voice annotation, built-in auto-flash, 2.5in colour LCD and a self-timer, and it has features to burn. The audiovisual mode allows you to output images and audio annotation to your TV or VCR in either NTSC or PAL format, and it's PC and Mac-compatible.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $1779
Distributor: Sony Australia
Contact: (02) 9878 9712
URL: www.sony.com.au

Canon FB620P

BEST SCANNER UNDER $300

You can on a . . .

Canon has done a great job with this unit, offering 600dpi hardware (optical) resolution in a very small package, using Canon's L-IDE technology. It connects to the parallel printer port, so it will work with most PCs. The package includes Ulead's iPhotoExpress and Caere's OmniPage LE for optical character recognition. It works with Windows 95, 98 or NT 4.0. Colour depth is 30-bit in, 24-bit out.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $259
Distributor: Canon Australia
Contact: 1800 021 167
URL: www.canon.com.au

1440 dpi
up to A3.
ESS · STOP PRESS · STOP PRESS · STO

1440 DPI, PhotoRealism, richer blacks, exceptional speed, plus

independent cartridges.

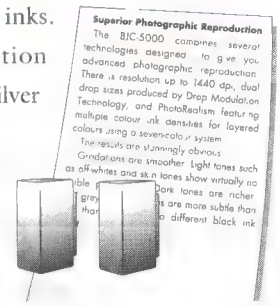
The idea of a dual cartridge system has existed for awhile. But needless to say, some systems are better than others. The new BJC™-5000 proves this point.

1440 dpi with variable ink drop sizes. Both the standard colour and optional PhotoRealism™ cartridges use Canon's Drop Modulation Technology™ with variable drop sizes in resolution up to 1440 dpi. The combination delivers smoother colour gradations and far less "grain" on virtually all paper types.

New dual-cartridge system enhances performance. Then, a special dual cartridge system lets both cartridges act independently to complement each other. In "split-page mode" identical black or colour cartridges can effectively double print speeds. Or, using different ink types you can produce exceptional quality effects, with the printer automatically identifying and using each cartridge for the desired result.

Professional Resolution
Ultra-High Definition.

90 times more colour combinations. For instance, PhotoRealism inks can be used with conventional inks for a seven-colour ink system, with multiple ink densities per pixel for up to 90 times the colour combinations of conventional CMYK inks. Combined with Drop Modulation Technology the result approaches silver halide quality reproduction.



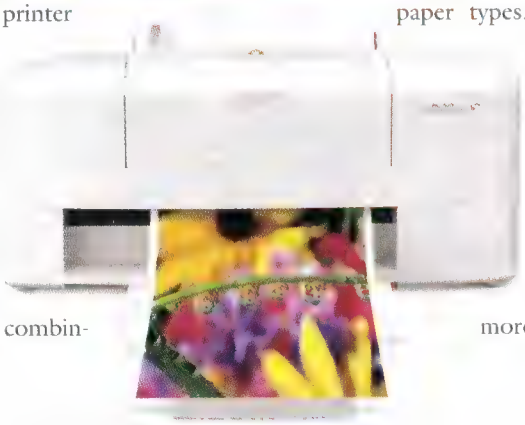
Superior Photographic Reproduction
The BJC-5000 combines several technologies designed to give you advanced photographic reproduction. There is resolution up to 1440 dpi, dual drop sizes produced by Drop Modulation Technology, and PhotoRealism featuring multiple colour ink densities for layered colours using a seven-colour system.
The results are stunningly obvious. Gradations are smoother. Light tones such as off-whites and skin tones show virtually no visible grey. Dark tones are richer than ... are more subtle than ... different black ink

An all-new approach to black. It uses new, black ink that is blacker than conventional ink. As a result, black & white documents have an exceptionally high degree of finish. Two of these cartridges (BC-23) are included in the box, and may be used simultaneously.

Independent print heads can halve print time.

Print up to A3. Both standard and PhotoRealism inks may be used on all A4 paper types. It will also print up to A3, and supports banner printing to the equivalent length of 6 A4 pages.

Canon Customer Care. All Canon printers feature a one-year warranty, upgradeable to three years for minimal cost, and are backed by unlimited hot-line support. To learn more call us on 1 800 021 167.



PhotoRealism™

New BJC-5000 – $399RRP including 3 cartridges.

Canon

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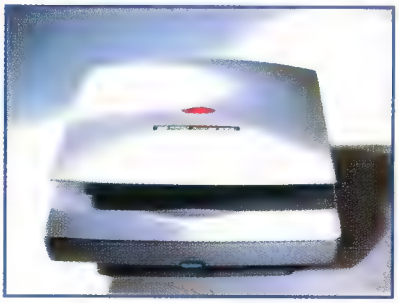
CS/8618

Hewlett-Packard ScanJet 6200C

BEST SCANNER UNDER $800

Rolls Royce

Hewlett-Packard has long been regarded the Rolls Royce of scanners and the ScanJet 6200C lives up to the standard. Featuring 1200dpi optical resolution, the 6200C also has 36-bit colour depth — the combination gives you excellent quality scans suitable for any application. It comes with both USB (universal serial bus) and SCSI interfaces, although you will need to provide your own SCSI card and cable if you use this option. That said, the USB connection allows for easy installation. There's also a 25-page automatic document feeder for hands-free scanning, making this unit suitable for both schools and small businesses. It also includes a 35mm slide scanning adaptor — it's not as good as a real slide scanner, but it's certainly better than nothing. The 6200C



supports Windows 95, 98 and NT 4.0. Software includes HP's PrecisionScan Pro with built-in Caere OCR (optical character recognition) support (Caere is the maker of OmniPage Pro) and Adobe PhotoDeluxe Business Edition image-editing software.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $745
Distributor: Hewlett-Packard Australia
Contact: 131 347
URL: www.hp.com.au

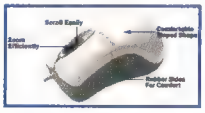
Microsoft IntelliMouse Pro

BEST INPUT DEVICE

Smart mouse

Microsoft invented the wheel mouse with the original IntelliMouse, and has taken it a step further with the Microsoft IntelliMouse Pro, which has the functionality of the original Intellimouse, but has enhanced its feel and comfort.

The IntelliMouse Pro has a wheel located between the two normal buttons. Clicking with the wheel gives the same



results as clicking with the centre button of a three-button mouse. Rotating the wheel navigates within a program, such as scrolling up and down in a word processor or spreadsheet, or navigating within a Web browser.

The body of the IntelliMouse Pro arches up, making it taller than many others, supporting the hand and holding the wrist straighter, minimising the risk of RSI. The sides of the mouse are rubberised, giving secure control without any need to hold it tightly.

Judge: John Hepworth

Price: $130
Distributor: Microsoft
Contact: 132 058
URL: www.microsoft.com

NEC MultiSync E750

BEST 17IN DISPLAY

Worth every cent

There's nothing cheap about this monitor, but if you're after the best 17in around, you'll find it hard to go past this. It can handle up to 1600 by 1200-pixel resolution and offers a fine 0.25mm dot-pitch, an important feature for sharp images with pinpoint accuracy. It also offers 1024 by 768-pixel resolution at a

refresh rate of up to 114Hz, which few 17in monitors on the market can match. It even manages a 'flicker-free' 85Hz at 1280 by 1024-pixel resolution. The viewable image size is an impressive 16 inches, again larger than many 17in models on the market. Any image errors can be corrected by the myriad of onscreen controls, including moiré correction, image distortion and colour temperature adjustments. You won't get much change from $1100 for one of these, but you're not likely to need another monitor again for quite some time either.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $1040
Distributor: NEC Australia
Contact: 131 632
URL: www.nec.com.au

Sony GDM-400PS

BEST 19IN DISPLAY

Size and quality

This unit offers both screen size and image quality. It's more expensive than some, but makes up for it. The screen is vertically flat and supports high scan rates,

which means you can hit the top 1600 by 1200 pixel resolution with a refresh rate of 75Hz. Viewable image size is a generous 18 inches, and although the 0.25mm dot pitch is not perfect, it still provides a sharp, clear image. The control buttons are harder to get at, but they're also harder to bump. The onscreen controls allow you to correct errors. With a three-year onsite warranty you won't go far wrong.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $1670
Distributor: Sony Australia
Contact: 1800 226 429
URL: www.sony.com.au

Australia's most popular printer for home and small offices combines exceptional value, with outstanding performance.

Use 75% less ink. Super Economy mode reduces ink consumption by 75% compared to Standard mode, and works for both black and white and colour. Combined with an optional high capacity, black ink cartridge, it can print up to 2400 pages in black and white, and up to 400 in colour using standard inks*. That's anywhere from two to five times the output of any direct competitor!

Photo quality printing. There are three colour print modes – Normal, Fine and Photo. Photo mode emphasises highlights and contrasts, and improves half-tones by producing richer blacks. Or, using the optional black ink cartridge, you can convert the BJC™-265SP to a fast B&W printer.

Brilliant colour, super economy, optional PhotoRealism, better Internet printing,

all for just $149.

Optional PhotoRealism™ To this Canon adds the option of PhotoRealism inks, for photographic reproduction approaching silver halide quality. It produces up to four times the colour combinations of conventional CMY printers, for smoother colour gradations and more accurate colours in skin tones and other light shades.

Better Internet images. Image Optimisation takes low resolution Internet images (typically 72 dpi), and prints them at the highest resolution supported by the printer to reduce jagged edges and pixelisation.

Canon Customer Care. All Canon printers feature a one-year warranty, upgradeable to three years for minimal cost, and are backed by Customer Care hot-line support. Drivers are available for Windows® 3.1x/95/98 and Windows NT. The BJC-265SP offers exceptional operating economy plus high quality colour printing, for just $149. For more information call 1 800 021 167.

Photo Realism™

BJC-265SP colour Bubble Jet™ printer – $149RRP

Canon

* Based on 5% page coverage for B&W and 7.5% coverage for colour, Super Economy not available with PhotoRealism inks. Price shown is the recommended retail price including tax. Canon and the Canon logo are registered trademarks and BJC, Bubble Jet and PhotoRealism are trademarks of Canon Inc. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corp. in the U.S. and other countries. Canon Australia Pty Ltd, ACN 005 002 951.

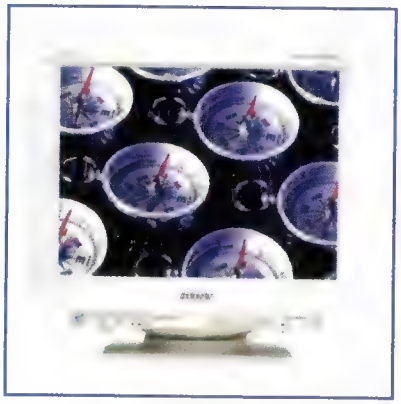
CS8409

Sony GDM-500PS

BEST 20/21IN DISPLAY

Bells and whistles

When you're paying this much money, you expect everything that opens and shuts. The 500PS from Sony offers the features and performance demanded by desktop publishers and CAD/CAM specialists. Despite the size of the screen, Sony has reduced the depth of the monitor compared with previous units, but without compromising the image quality. In fact, this unit will maintain a 1600 by 1200 pixel screen at an impressive 85Hz refresh rate; that's important because this 'flicker-free' rate means less eye fatigue. It even comes with an Apple Macintosh adaptor. Another bonus is the anti-reflective film coating to reduce reflective glare. But the neatest trick is Sony's ability to auto-centre the image



on the screen, which certainly makes life easier. With both 15-pin D-sub and BNC connection options, the 500PS has good flexibility. As you would expect, there are also onscreen controls to adjust virtually every aspect of the image you can imagine.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $2800
Distributor: Sony Australia
Contact: 1800 226 429
URL: www.sony.com.au

Sony CPD-L150

BEST 14/15IN FLAT-PANEL DISPLAY

High-quality display

The 15in TFT screen market is getting crowded, but this unit is the benchmark. Able to display images up to 1024 by 768 pixels with a 85Hz refresh rate, it's a high-performance unit ideal for those who use a computer for long periods. The viewing angle makes it stand out; LCD screens are not known for their wide-angle qualities, but this unit has a wide 140-degree horizontal and 120-degree vertical. As with most LCD screens, it also accepts analog composite video input from a VCR or camera. Something LCD screens don't often do well is display less-than-native resolution images at full-screen size. Sony's Digital FlexRes technology helps this unit do it better than most, and it supports both PCs and Apple Power Mac systems. Officially priced at $3800, you can get it more cheaply by shopping around. This high-quality display should be at the top of your list.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $3802
Distributor: Sony Australia
Contact: (02) 9878 9712
URL: www.sony.com.au

Guillemot Maxi Gamer

BEST GRAPHICS/GAMERS CARD

3D powerhouse

Not so long ago, 3Dfx reigned supreme in the arena of 3D acceleration, but that all changed following the release of nVidia's newest 3D powerhouse. With features like 32-bit rendering, anisotropic filtering, a stencil buffer and support for large textures, the Riva TNT2 now offers the best available combination of performance and image quality. And of all the Riva cards we've tested, the Maxi Gamer Xentor32 is the best. Using the Riva TNT2 Ultra chipset and stacked with 32Mb of onboard RAM, this card will run standard 2D Windows applications or 3D games at a blistering pace. Other trimmings include hardware-assisted DVD playback and TV output, making the Xentor32 quite simply the best available in 3D gaming.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

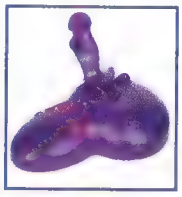
Price: $539.95
Distributor: Ubi Soft
Contact: (02) 9362 1414
URL: www.guillemot.com

Logitech WingMan Force

BEST GAMES CONTROLLER

Good vibrations

There are plenty of titles around that support force-feedback technology and this can add a new dimension to gameplay. However, you're going to need a good force-feedback unit. Of all those tested so far, Logitech's WingMan Force is the pick of the crop. With its high build quality, large, comfy handgrip and well-placed buttons, it is a very versatile joystick. The cable drive system means it can generate a subtle, varied range of movement and feedback effects, and it can handle everything from flight simulations to 3D action games with ease.



Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $269.95
Distributor: Logitech
Contact: (02) 9972 3711
URL: www.logitech.com/au/index.html

Whether you judge it on features, performance or price, the new BJC-2000SP is

amazing value for money.

The new BJC™-2000SP proves that beauty can be more than skin deep.

Because it was also designed to deliver high-speed blacks, superb photographic printing, superior operating economy and even offers optional scan/copy/fax functions – all for an incredibly low price. And that's just for starters!

Introducing Automatic Image Improvement. Canon has developed a way to automatically improve less than perfect digital images, without needing colour balancing and re-touching. It's called Photo Optimiser. This new, selectable driver function automatically adjusts for defects in exposure, highlights and shadows, without affecting the original file in the computer.

Brilliant colour. To further improve images, Drop Modulation Technology™ with dual drop sizes for smoother colour gradations works on all paper types. Then, for the gold standard in photographic reproduction, Canon's PhotoRealism inks[1] vary the saturation per pixel so that a single dot could have 0%, 33%, 67% or 100% of a colour. This produces up to five times as many colour combinations as conventional CMYK inks, with better half-tones and almost no visible grain, even in areas of low colour density.

Better operating economy. Super Economy mode reduces ink consumption by up to 75%, and works in both black and white and colour. It can print up to 3600 pages in black text, and up to 400 in colour.[2] And because the standard inks are optimised for low-cost plain paper, you can keep the cost of your everyday printing needs to a minimum.

Optional IS-22 scan head fits into print head slot.

It's even a scanner. The optional IS-22 scan head allows you to turn your printer into a colour scanner in seconds. It scans colour images up to 360 dpi and documents for fax, OCR and copying functions with the appropriate software.

Canon Customer Care. Canon Australia supports the BJC-2000SP with a one-year warranty, upgradeable to three years for minimal cost, and is backed by Customer Care hot-line support. For more information call us on 1 800 021 167.

Photo Realism™

New BJC-2000SP colour Bubble Jet™ printer – $199[RRP]

Canon

Price shown is recommended retail price including tax. Canon and the Canon logo are registered trademarks, and BJC, Drop Modulation Technology and PhotoRealism are trademarks of Canon Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. 1. BC-20 Black and BC-22E PhotoRealism ink cartridges are optional. 2. B&W output for BC-20 ink cartridge at 5% coverage and colour output for BC-21e measured at 7.5% coverage. Canon Australia Pty Ltd ACN 005 002 951. CS/8411

miroVIDEO DC1000

Miro, miro on the wall

Pretty much any miro/Pinnacle video capture card that fits your budget is a good buy, and there are several to choose from.

However, the one we've chosen as the best is the top-of-the-range DC1000. This is about the best you can get before you move into the high-end workstation systems like Avid, and in some respects it's better.

The card is PCI, supports video and audio capture, and is designed to run under Windows NT or Windows 95/98. It allows you to capture and edit video to broadcast quality. The difference here is that the card uses MPEG-2 compression rather than Motion JPEG and supports dual-stream NLE (non-linear editing), allowing it to play effects, titles and filters in real time — no rendering.

It can capture full bandwidth 4:2:2 YUV broadcast-quality digital video with much better data rates than a conventional M-JPEG system. The price you pay for this is you cannot edit down to frame accuracy as well as you could on a M-JPEG system, due to the nature of MPEG-2 compression.

Included with the card is a breakout box, Adobe Premiere 5.1 RT, Photoshop 4.0 LE and Sonic Foundry's ACID Music.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: $4999
Distributor: Lako Vision
Contact: 1800 657 601
URL: www lakovision.com.au

Castlewood ORB Drives

High capacity

Backing up important data or moving huge files from place to place demands a high-capacity disk or tape drive that is fast and easy to use. Castlewood's ORB drives take the capacity and performance of removable cartridge hard drives into a new dimension. The drives come in internal and external versions with a variety of interfaces — parallel port, SCSI, and IDE. In each of these categories, the read and write speed is exceptionally high, with SCSI and IDE ORB drives approaching the speed of hard drives and the parallel ORB drive is much faster than most other parallel port drives.

Each cartridge has a capacity of 2.2Gb. Cartridges insert easily — just push in, then down. Cartridge ejection is by pressing a button on the drive or selecting the Eject option in Windows Explorer. ORB drives come with a good

range of software. ORB Tools checks connections, formats disks, ejects disks and has many other utility functions. There are also two backup programs — Professional Backup and Super Backup. Both work very well and are easy to use.

Judge: John Hepworth

Price: Internal $399; external $499; disks (each) $79
Distributor: Business Bits
Contact: (02) 9279 2420
URL: www.bbits.com.au

Hewlett Packard

Affordable and reliable

Last time we tested CD recorders, the HP CD-Writer 7200 won out. It produced good, reliable results at all burn speeds and was affordable to boot, beating the much more expensive SCSI drives it was up against.

The 8200 is the latest model from HP. Like the 7200, it uses an ATAPI/IDE interface, so it's easy to install and set up. Most CD-R software should recognise the drive. This new model supports CD-R/W and will burn and rewrite at up to 4X speed. CD-

ROM capabilities are 24X and it comes with the industry standard Adaptec Easy CD Creator, several HP applications and a disc labeller. The 8100 model is identical, except that it will write to CD-R/w at only 2X. Considering how well its predecessor did in our last roundup, this gets the nod as best CD writer.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: $799
Distributor: Hewlett-Packard Australia
Contact: 132 347
URL: www.hpcdwriter.com/

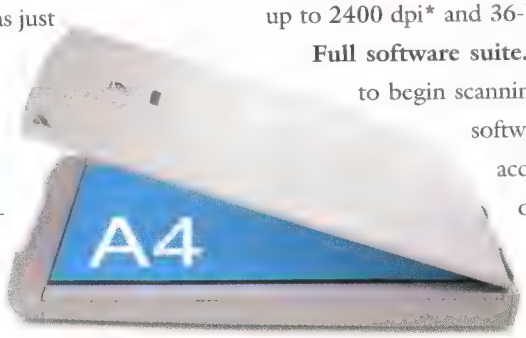
Canon's patented new LIDE technology helps these new scanners

break the price/quality barrier.

Reinvent is the most over used word in the computer business. But this time it's true. Canon has just reinvented scanners.

And not a little bit, but completely.

Introducing LIDE.™ Using a new, patented technology called LIDE (LED Indirect Exposure), we have fundamentally changed the way scanners work, and their price/performance ratio.



LIDE eliminates the need for costly, complex optical mirrors in image acquisition, while it maintains superior image quality and colour clarity.

Easy to use. At the same time, LIDE allowed us to design a smaller, sleeker scanner with an exceptional combination of beginner and expert controls, and with easy to connect (daisy chain) parallel port connections for Windows® 95/98 and NT 4.0.

The new CanoScan™ FB 330P and FB 630P offer a choice of 300 or 600 dpi optical resolution, plus enhanced resolution up to 2400 dpi* and 36-bit colour acquisition as standard.

Full software suite. Both come with everything needed to begin scanning immediately. The CanoCraft CS-P software works for both stand-alone image acquisition, and as a TWAIN driver for other applications. It features new, easier to use controls, and advanced controls for colour matching and image definition. Also included are PhotoExpress for image editing and OmniPage LE for OCR, a CD-ROM with full tutorial and user's manual, a parallel cable and power supply.

LIDE LED Indirect Exposure

Canon Customer Care. The FB 330P/630P scanners feature a one-year warranty upgradeable to three years for minimal cost, and are backed by unlimited hot-line support.

The new CanoScan FB 330P and FB 630P. You can see they are different at first glance. To learn more call 1 800 021 167.

Photo Realism™

FB 330P – Now $169RRP
FB 630P – Only $249RRP

Canon

Prices shown are the recommended retail prices including tax. Canon Australia Pty Ltd ACN 005 002 951. *Enhanced resolution dependant on driver and software used. Canon and the Canon logo are registered trademarks and PhotoRealism, CanoScan and LIDE are trademarks of Canon Inc. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corp. in the U.S. and other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Canon reserves the right to change specifications without notice. CS8619

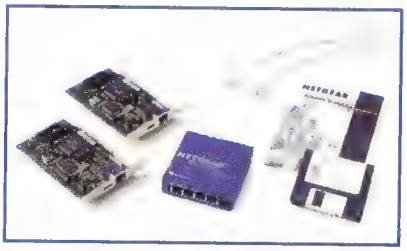
Netgear DB104 100/10Mbit/s

BEST HOME/SOHO NETWORKING SOLUTION

For beginners

Traditional Ethernet has a speed of 10 Mbit/s. While this is fast enough for non-demanding networks, it is too slow when there is high traffic with many huge files being transferred. 100 Mbit/s networking is the answer, dramatically increasing network bandwidth and reducing congestion.

Netgear's DB104 Network Starter Kit is a great way to set up a small network



from scratch or add a cluster of computers with 100Mbit/s networking to an existing 10Mbit/s network.

The kit contains a four-port 100/10 Mbit/s Netgear DS104 hub, two PCI 100/10Mbit/s Ethernet cards, two network cables to suit the hub and cards and the drivers for the network cards. It contains everything needed to install and configure a two-port 100Mbit/s network quickly and easily. More cards can be cabled to the hub, or the hub can be uplinked to a larger network to expand the system as required. All ports sense the speed of the remote devices and individually switch to 100Mbit/s or 10 Mbit/s as required.

Netgear offers an excellent expansion path. This includes individually packaged network cards of the same type found in the kit and a variety of 100/10Mbit/s hubs with up to 16 ports.

Judge: John Hepworth

Price: $349
Distributor: Netgear
Contact: (02) 9927 8888
Web: www.netgearinc.com

Seagate Barracuda 28GB

BEST HOME/SOHO HARD DRIVE

Room to swim

Home and SOHO users are constantly looking for larger and larger hard drives. Image files, audio files, databases, documents and spreadsheets grow in number and size every day. All of these functions demand a fast hard drive with high capacity. At the same time, the typical SOHO and home user is looking for an IDE drive, avoiding the cost of the SCSI card needed to connect a SCSI drive.

Seagate's Barracuda 28GB ST328040A drive fits all these specifications. It has an Ultra/66 interface, the latest variation of IDE, and a 7200 RPM rotational speed, both of which give excellent performance. In addition, its capacity of 28Gb is one of the largest currently available in IDE drives.

The Barracuda 28 has an extra feature that sets it apart: a flexible plastic

anti-static sheet covers the drive electronics on the bottom of the drive, preventing accidental contact and minimising static damage. Even better, Seagate prints comprehensive installation instructions and jumper settings on this sheet, eliminating the need to refer to any other documentation when installing the drive.

The Seagate Barracuda ST328040A is fast, easy to install, has very high capacity and its competitive price makes it excellent value for money.

Judge: John Hepworth

Price: $646.60
Distributor: Seagate
Contact: (02) 9725 3366
URL: www.seagate.com

MSI MS-6163

BEST MOTHERBOARD

Work of art

When it comes to motherboards with flexibility, the MSI MS-6163 is truly a work of art. It's a Slot-1 design, so if you're running a Pentium II, Celeron or Pentium III processor and you want the ultimate tweaking toy, this is definitely the board for you. With multiple frontside bus settings from 66 to an amazing 153MHz, this 440BX board gives you many different options. It's also quite speedy, producing the best Quake II score we could achieve with a 500MHz Pentium III. Although it's a little smaller than some fully featured boards, everything is well located and easy to get to. There's room for 768Mb of RAM and, of course, there's an external AGP

slot. Everything — and we mean everything — is adjustable from within the BIOS. There are no jumper settings here to worry about. If you're keen, you can even adjust the CPU voltage settings within the BIOS — something few other boards can do, although we recommend caution using them. While 4X AGP is soon to be available, superseding this board, no doubt MSI will come up with the goods again.

Judge: Darren Yates

Price: $185
Distributor: MSI Computer Australia
Contact: (02) 9748 0070
URL: www.msicomputer.com.au

Windows 98/98 SE

BEST OPERATING SYSTEM

Smooth operator

It's been a mixed year for operating systems. We saw the minor fixes of Windows 98 SE and Mac OS 8.6, and neither was a must-have. At the same time, we witnessed a stunning performance from Linux, even though it lacks the finesse required to appeal to the average Windows or Mac user. And, at the time of writing, the operating systems that could truly be the best of the year — Windows 2000 and the Mac OS 9.0 — are yet to set foot on the stage. So if you're after the best operating system available, our choice is Windows 98. It delivered a solid collection of improvements on the previous version, ranging from peppier performance and new system tools to countless sensible tweaks missing from Windows 95. And for all the controversy it provoked, Microsoft's integration of Internet Explorer into the OS made perfect sense to most punters. After all, they figured, why shouldn't a PC in the Internet age come ready to surf?

The current Windows 98 boxes are, in fact, Windows 98 Second Edition. For the same price you get the much improved Internet Explorer 5.0 browser and Outlook Express 5.0 e-mail program, the MP3-compatible Windows Media Player, and the ability to share a single Internet connection between two networked PCs. All up, it's a performance that no-one can better.

Judge: David Flynn

Price: $349
Distributor: Microsoft Australia
Contact: 132 058
URL: www.microsoft.com/australia

BEST DESKTOP UTILITIES

Unimpressed

I have to confess that I don't quite see why Microsoft keeps adding more and more system utilities to Windows. After all, third-party vendors produce some excellent system utilities and adding them in just costs Microsoft money without improving sales, as Windows already owns virtually the whole PC market. But that's what's happening, and it makes life exceedingly difficult for the third-party vendors. For me, too: it's impossible to call a product 'best utility suite of the year' when most of what it does is duplicate built-in functions to no purpose.

As readers of my comparison feature in the July issue will remember, all of the current crop of system utility suites share one unfortunate shortcoming: their vendors — especially Network Associates — have shovelled as much as possible into a giant bundle with little or no regard for what is truly useful. The result is a clutter of minor enhancements and often inferior duplicates of standard Windows utilities, hiding occasional gems. The standout components are Symantec (ex Quarterdeck) Cleansweep and McAfee (ex Cybermedia) Uninstaller, with Mijenix PowerDesk rating a close third. Norton CleanSweep is available separately, which is fortunate, as a good uninstaller is essential.

Judge: Jan Wikström

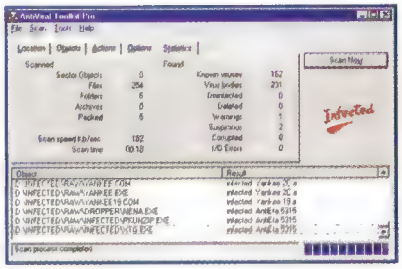
No award

AntiViral Toolkit Pro 3.0

BEST ANTI-VIRUS PRODUCT

Medicine cabinet

Most anti-virus programs available today do the job of scanning and preventing invasions remarkably well. Most systems go down not because a virus scanner is not being used, but because its database of rogue applications is not kept up to date. The Russian-developed AVP was the outright champ in sussing out viruses in our cocktail CD test of dubious applications, and its winning feature is the way it updates itself easily via the Net. Although we ran several scanners to check for malicious programs before sending our CD-ROMs for duplication,



AVP seems to be more exhaustive. It scans more slowly than the competition, but it's thorough and that's a good trade-off in our book.

Others that shaped up well this year in our tests were Norton Anti-Virus, Norman Virus Control and PC-cillin.

Judge: John Hilvert

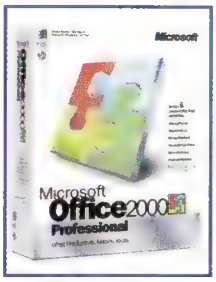
Price: $79, $50 for students
Distributor: AVP Australia
Contact: (07) 3204 5000
URL: www.avp.com (local site is www.avp.tm)

Microsoft Office 2000 Professional

BEST OFFICE SUITE

Seamless

Most computer users need an office suite — a combination of word processor, spreadsheet and personal information manager forms the basic kit for most people. This year was a big one for office suites, with all the major players — Corel, Lotus and Microsoft — launching products in the lead-up to the new millennium. Microsoft Office 2000 is a clear winner in this category.



It leads the field in creating a more seamless interface between office applications and the Web. For example, the definition of a word processing document (or a worksheet) as against a Web page continues to blur. Office 2000 shows new and made-over interfaces within the core applications, making them closer in look and behaviour to each other. Other innovations include interactive spreadsheets and dual Web/application file formats. The noticeable head start that the suites from Lotus and Corel have over Microsoft's Office is that they have voice recognition technology. But neither of these suites offer the Web tools or sheer number of powerful applications that Microsoft Office does. For strength of applications, integration, power and Web functionality, Microsoft Office 2000 is the out and out leader.

Judge: Helen Bradley

Price: $1009
Distributors: Tech Pacific
Contact: (02) 9381 6000
URL: www.microsoft.com/australia

Quicken 7

BEST DESKTOP PERSONAL FINANCE PACKAGE

Speed up your accounts

Personal finance software is increasingly more than a tool for balancing your chequebook, as the two leaders in the category, Quicken 7 and Microsoft Money 99, show. Along with a tool to track the balance in your chequebook and manage your credit card balances, expect to get investment portfolio management, loan calculators and superannuation contribution tracking. While Microsoft Money, at $49, costs less and has a swish new high-tech interface, it's a resource hog (needing a Pentium 90 and between 40 and 120Mb free disk space) and does not offer as much as Quicken 7.

Quicken's interface is a simple, easy-to-use view of your bank accounts. It can handle multiple currencies and interfaces with the popular tax preparation software used by accountants. It

comes with excellent multimedia tutorials incorporating sound and video to help new users get up to speed. It also offers tracking of taxation credits on investment income — franked and unfranked dividends, imputation credits and TFN amounts. Both versions give you quick access to the Quicken Web site and the ability to update your share portfolio values. Quicken Deluxe adds a module for managing your home assets for insurance purposes, a financial address book, financial alerts and an emergency records organiser.

Judge: Helen Bradley

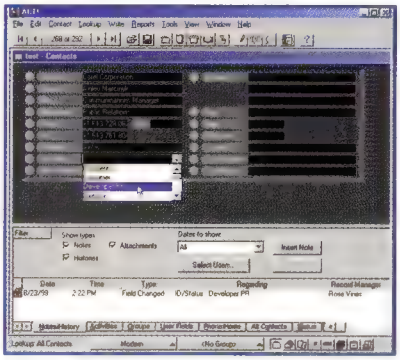
Price: Personal $79.95; Deluxe $99.95; $29.95 (est) GST upgrade anticipated for release during the last quarter of 1999
Distributor: Dataflow (02) 9417 9700; Reckon (02) 9562 7900
URL: www.intuit.com.au

Act! 4.0

BEST DESKTOP CONTACT MANAGER

Star turn

This field has thinned out over the past year. Some products have moved upmarket while a couple have failed to keep up. Products worth considering include TrackerMaximizer5, Outlook 2000 and ACT! 4. TrackerMaximizer is a competent and highly configurable contact manager for single users and small organisations. Outlook 2000 combines contact management with scheduling and e-mail capabilities. Best contact manager honours belong to Symantec's ACT! 4.0, which has been refined,



improving an already solid product. It combines ease of use with power and flexibility, letting you track all activity with sales or business contacts. Adding, grouping and locating contacts is easy and there are tools for generating many kinds of documents, scheduling and producing reports. SideACT! lets you note down information and then file it automatically within ACT! itself. It's a pleasure to use and the clincher is its flexibility. ACT! integrates well with the Internet, e-mail programs and hand-held computers and handles importing and exporting contacts from other programs with aplomb.

Judge: Rose Vines

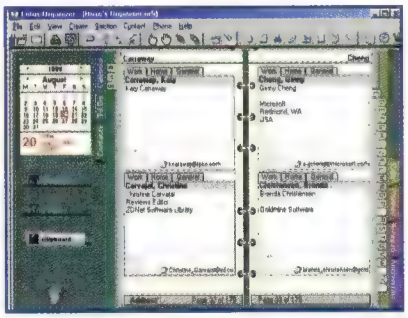
Price: $199
Distributor: Symantec Australia
Contact: (02) 9850 1005
URL: www.symantec.com.au

Lotus Organizer 5.0

BEST PERSONAL INFORMATION MANAGER

Get organised

PIMs used to be one of the most interesting categories of desktop software. The market has now fragmented into dedicated contact managers, e-mail and scheduling applications and a few products that have remained true to the original concept. The program that started it all, Sidekick, is still around and doing well. Now made by Starfish Computing, Sidekick 99 is unintimidating, sleek, fast,



and handles importing, exporting and synchronising better than most. Outlook 2000, a powerhouse which pops up as a contender for best product in a number of categories, also makes a very decent PIM. The best, though, is another familiar name: Lotus Organizer. Organizer 5.0 combines a friendly address book appearance with features that suit both individual users and groups. It has all the features you'd expect — contacts, calendar, to-do list, planner, notepad, call tracking and anniversaries. It also has lots of nice touches that make working with it easy and fun: extensive use of drag-and-drop and right-click menus; an Easy Clip feature for grabbing text from other programs; simple ways to group contacts and connect contacts and activities; and integration with e-mail programs.

Judge: Rose Vines

Price: $134
Distributor: Lotus Australia
Contact: 1800 252 408
URL: www.lotus.com/home.nsf/tabs/australia

MYOB 8

BEST ACCOUNTING

Account for yourself

The planned implementation of the GST next year has heated up the competition in this category. MYOB 8 and Intuit's Quickbooks are the clear leaders, with powerful but inexpensive solutions to most small business accounting needs and each displaying good integration with Australian needs. However, MYOB 8 remains the outstanding product in this category, due in part to the strength of its local support and its proposed handling of the GST issue. It offers modules for managing your general ledger, accounts receivable and payable, inventory, bank reconciliation and reporting, and its newly overhauled interface shows a clear diagrammatic representation of your business processes. There are plenty of built-in reports and a range of

invoices and good inventory options, with an intuitive set-up screen for inventory items. The new OfficeLink option allows any preset MYOB report to be exported to Microsoft Excel, Word or Corel WordPerfect format. MYOB 8 is offered with or without integrated payroll, and there is a multiuser product in the series. You can add on Point of Sale with the associated product Digi~till. MYOB offers extremely good value for money to growing businesses.

Judge: Helen Bradley

Price: MYOB Accounting $399 (with Payroll $525)
Distributor: Data-Tech Software
Contact: (03) 9222 9777; 1800 555 007
URL: www.datatech.com.au

Microsoft Publisher 2000

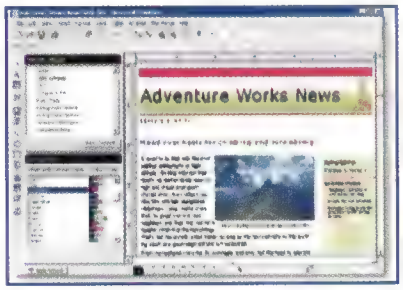
BEST ENTRY-LEVEL DTP

Self-publishing made easy

Designed primarily for small to medium-sized businesses to create marketing materials, brochures and newsletters, this program uses wizards and templates which make producing a publication as easy as possible and the results are quite professional.

It integrates with the rest of the MS office suite, of course, and the interface is pretty transparent across all applications. It will also print to the Web for exporting an HTML version of your publications. This could then be fine-tuned in FrontPage 2000.

Other cool features include Smart



Recolouring of clipart, a Design Checker to help sort out any output problems, and a very professional print output system which supports spot or four-colour process (CMYK) separations, and solid and process Pantone Colors.

You can also buy it with Picture It! 99 bundled, which gives you image manipulations and clipart to use in your documents.

Like the rest of the Office Suite, MS Publisher is becoming the standard for business users and the average Joe or Joanne who is serious about his or her computing efforts.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: Included in the MS Office 2000 Suite
Distributor: Microsoft Australia
Contact: 132 058
URL: www.microsoft.com/office/publisher/

EXPERIENCE A NEW DIMENSION.

Dell Dimension® XPS T series photographed with optional features, 17" flat panel monitor and Altec Lansing ADA880 Digital surround sound speakers with subwoofer (subwoofer not pictured).

It's a whole new dimension in vision, sound, speed and Internet experience on the Dell Dimension® XPS T series. Build a staggering system with the fastest Intel® Pentium®III processor, a monster 21" (v.i.s 19.8") Trinitron monitor and ultra high refresh rates for speed and realism. Or you can upgrade to a flat panel monitor for cutting edge technology that gives you clear, sharp images with less bulk and weight. Upgrade to a 3dfx Voodoo3 3000 or a 32MB Diamond Ultra TNT2 V770U AGP Graphics Card and Altec Lansing ADA880 digital surround sound speakers with subwoofers. Blow your mind with a system specifically designed for the rich graphics and booming sound of cutting edge 3D games and multi-media Web sites. The Dell Dimension® – it's a whole new dimension in cyber-experience.

Call Dell now on 1300 303 251 or visit our web store at www.dell.com.au for a closer experience of this new dimension.

Dell 17" flat panel monitor

ELL DIMENSION® XPS T600 DESKTOP
NTEL® PENTIUM® III PROCESSOR 600MHz

Mini Tower Model
512KB Integrated L2 Cache
128MB 100MHz SDRAM
37.5GB[1] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive
32MB Diamond Ultra TNT2 V770U AGP Graphics Card
SoundBlaster Live! Value 576 Voice Sound Card
8X Max[4] Variable DVD-ROM Drive and Decoder Card with TV Out
Sony CD-RW with Formatted Media
Altec Lansing ADA-880 Dolby® Digital Speakers with Subwoofer
19" Colour Monitor (17.9" v.i.s.)
Logitech 4-button Mouse Man® Wheel (PS/2V)
Microsoft® Windows® 98 Second Edition
Microsoft® OEM Works Suite 99
Power Game Pack optimized for Intel® Pentium® III processor
McAfee Virus Scan
3Com® US Robotics® 56K PCI Voice Fax modem for Windows
Microsoft® Elite Keyboard
Logitech WingMan® Force Joystick
3 Year Limited Warranty
Free Lifetime Telephone Technical Support

$5,899* plus delivery

50 per week**

pgrade to:
384MB 100MHz SDRAM $596
512MB 100MHz SDRAM $1936
768MB 100MHz SDRAM $3277
Quicken Deluxe – Personal or Small Business Financial Software $89

E•VALUE CODE 210932-472310

DELL DIMENSION® XPS T600 DESKTOP
INTEL® PENTIUM® III PROCESSOR 600MHz

- Mini Tower Model
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- Turtle Beach Montego II 320 Voice PCI Sound Card
- 48X Max[2] Variable EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Harmon Kardon HK195 Speakers
- 17" Colour Monitor (15.9" v.i.s.)
- Microsoft IntelliMouse™
- Microsoft® Windows® 98 Second Edition
- Microsoft® OEM Works Suite 99
- Power Game Pack optimized for Intel® Pentium® III processor
- McAfee Virus Scan
- 3Com® US Robotics® 56K PCI Voice Fax modem for Windows
- Logitech WingMan® Extreme® Digital Joystick
- 3 Year Limited Warranty
- Free Lifetime Telephone Technical Support

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- 19" Colour Monitor (17.9 v.i.s.) $428
- Quicken Deluxe – Personal or Small Business Financial Software $89

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- Mini Tower Model
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- 16MB 3DFX Voodoo3 3000D AGP Graphics Card
- Turtle Beach Montego II 320 Voice PCI Sound Card
- 48X Max[2] Variable EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Harman Kardon HK195 Speakers
- 17" Colour Monitor (15.9" v.i.s.)
- Microsoft® IntelliMouse™
- Microsoft® Windows® 98 Second Edition
- Microsoft® OEM Works Suite 99
- Power Game Pack optimized for Intel® Pentium® III processor
- McAfee Virus Scan
- 3Com® US Robotics® 56K PCI Voice Fax modem for Windows
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- 3 Year Limited Warranty
- Free Lifetime Telephone Technical Support

$2,299* plus delivery

$19 per week**

Upgrade to:
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- Quicken Deluxe – Personal or Small Business Financial Software $89

E•VALUE CODE 210912-472310

DELL DIMENSION® L500C DESKTOP
NTEL® CELERON™ PROCESSOR 500MHz

Micro Tower Model
Intel® 810 Chipset
128KB Integrated L2 Cache
64MB 100MHz SDRAM
6.4 GB[1] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive
Integrated Direct AGP 4MB Dynamic Video Memory
Creative Labs SoundBlaster 64 Voice PCI Sound Card
8X Max[4] Variable DVD-ROM Drive and Software Decoding
Harman Kardon HK195 Speakers
15" Colour Monitor (13.7" v.i.s.)
Microsoft® IntelliMouse™
Microsoft® Windows® 98 Second Edition
Microsoft® OEM Works Suite 99
McAfee Virus Scan
3Com® US Robotics® 56K PCI Voice Fax modem for Windows
3 Year Limited Warranty
Free Lifetime Telephone Technical Support

$1,939* plus delivery

$17 per week**

Upgrade to.
- 19" Colour Monitor (17.9" v.i.s.) $614
- Iomega Zip 250MB Internal Drive $279
- HP DeskJet 695C Colour Printer $239
- Quicken Deluxe – Personal or Small Business Financial Software $89

E•VALUE CODE 210911-472310

DELL DIMENSION® L466C DESKTOP
INTEL® CELERON™ PROCESSOR 466MHz

- Micro Tower Model
- Intel® 810 Chipset
- 128KB Integrated L2 Cache
- 64MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 6.4GB[1] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- Integrated Direct AGP 4MB Dynamic Video Memory
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster 64 Voice PCI Sound Card
- 8X Max[4] Variable DVD-ROM Drive and Software Decoding
- Harman Kardon HK195 Speakers
- 15" Colour Monitor (13.7" v.i.s.)
- Microsoft® IntelliMouse™
- Microsoft® Windows® 98 Second Edition
- Microsoft® OEM Works Suite 99
- McAfee Virus Scan
- 3Com® US Robotics® 56K PCI Voice Fax modem for Windows
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- Free Lifetime Telephone Technical Support

$1,779* plus delivery

$15 per week**

Upgrade to.
- 13.6 GB[1] Ultra ATA Hard Drive $93
- Iomega Zip 100MB Internal Drive $140
- HP DeskJet 695C Colour Printer $239
- Quicken Deluxe – Personal or Small Business Financial Software $89

E•VALUE CODE 210910-472310

DELL DIMENSION® L433C DESKTOP
INTEL® CELERON™ PROCESSOR 433MHz

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- Intel® 810 Chipset
- 128KB Integrated L2 Cache
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- 3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- Integrated Direct AGP 4MB Dynamic Video Memory
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster 64 Voice PCI Sound Card
- 40X Max[3] Variable EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Harman Kardon HK195 Speakers
- 15" Colour Monitor (13.7" v.i s.)
- Microsoft® IntelliMouse™
- Microsoft® Windows® 98 Second Edition
- Microsoft® OEM Works Suite 99
- McAfee Virus Scan
- 3Com® US Robotics® 56K PCI Voice Fax modem for Windows
- 3 Year Limited Warranty
- Free Lifetime Telephone Technical Support

$1,599* plus delivery

$13 per week**

Upgrade to:
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- Quicken Deluxe – Personal or Small Business Financial Software $89

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Adobe InDesign

BEST PROFESSIONAL DTP

New team-mate

I'm going way out on a limb by choosing this brand-new product from Adobe, which hasn't even been released at the time of writing. We have tested a preview version, though, and were quite impressed, despite the inevitable bugs and unfinished sections.

Naturally, it integrates seamlessly with other Adobe products like Photoshop, Illustrator and Acrobat PDF, which can be a real time-saver for professional DTPers. It also supports cool stuff like nested text and graphics, gradient fills and strokes, Bezier paths and other tools more akin to an illustration package. For productivity gains, you can have multiple views of your project open at once, document-wide layers, a master page (of course), and unlimited undo/redo capabilities.

Positioning of text and kerning options are top-notch and it will open QuarkXPress and PageMaker files. One feature that really impressed us, though, was the ability to export a publication to HTML (or XML). This was demonstrated for us successfully — even if the results were a bit crude in the preview version.

It won't be cheap, but it is a professional package. For any publication producer using other Adobe products (and who isn't?) who also produces a Web site, this is a must-have program. It should be out very soon, so keep an eye out for it.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: TBA
Distributor: Adobe Australia
Contact: 1300 550 305
URL: www.adobe.com

Corel Print House Magic

BEST HOME GRAPHICS PACKAGE

Magical

Choosing the best home graphics package of the year is tough, as there are so many excellent products available. For the best all-round package, the award must go to Corel Print House Magic 4. This mega-package provides many of the graphics tools in the company's flagship graphics package, CorelDraw, bundled together with Corel Photo House image editing and effects software. A cartload of wizards step you through creating everything from pop-up characters to wine labels, making Print House a program the whole family can enjoy. Corel also showers you with its usual largesse: clipart, photos and fonts. There are three other products you should consider if your graphics needs are a little more specific. For image editing, that old shareware stalwart Paint Shop Pro is still a winner. By the time you read this, Version 6 should be available from www.comm-unique.com.au.

For sheer creative pleasure, however, try MetaCreation's Art Dabbler or Painter 5.5 Web Edition, sold by Scholastic (www.scholastica.com.au). Art Dabbler will encourage the artist in any youngster, while Painter is an awe-inspiring digital painting tool that will stretch the budget but also the realm of the possible.

Judge: Rose Vines

Price: Classic $69; Premium $89
Distributor: Corel
Contact: 1800 658 850
URL: www.corel.com.au

iGrafx Professional

BEST BUSINESS DRAWING PACKAGE

Business graphics

iGrafx Professional, from Micrografx, is a graphics product aimed squarely at business users rather than artists or graphics professionals. It is the successor to the well-known Micrografx product, ABC Flowcharter 7.

The package includes iGrafx Business, a general-purpose business illustration program. This contains modules which simply and easily create diagrams, charts and other illustrations for business presentations and inclusion in reports and other business publications. iGrafx Business also has a photo retouching module which is used to edit and manipulate photographs and similar images.

More useful in many businesses is the flow-chart module. Flow-charting is vital for many business tasks such as drawing organisation charts, writing process instructions for staff, implementing an ISO 9000 Quality System, process improvement, documenting a network or developing software. Shapes for each part of the chart are quickly dropped onto the sheet and joined by drag and drop. Need to move a shape such as a decision diamond? Just drag it to the new position, and all the joining lines redraw automatically.

VBA support is included, allowing development of custom applications, while iDiagrams technology allows charts to interact with user input, databases and other applications.

Judge: John Hepworth

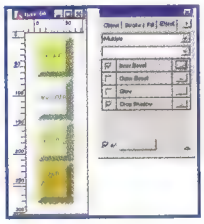
Price: $740
Distributor: Micrografx
Contact: (02) 9415 2642
URL: www.micrografx.com

Macromedia Fireworks 2

BEST WEB GRAPHICS TOOL

Watch those sparks fly

First in the heady market of dedicated Web graphics tools, Fireworks integrated messy tasks such as image slicing, mouse rollovers, GIF animations, buttons image maps and optimisation into one program. Built from the ground up as a Web graphics tool, it creates and tranforms images to a straight Web-optimised resolution of 72dpi. It also introduced a system of mapping vector-styled images to Web graphics that was both elegant and solved overall image style issues better than any other product. In particular, its Live Effects included drop shadows, bevels, embosses, and glows. Unlike effects in traditional applications, Live Effects' properties were in the object to which they were assigned. When this changed, the effect updated automatically on the Web. This radical rethink meant that people either loved or hated the Fireworks graphics creation environment. It also added some bugs to the program. Fireworks 2.0 is less buggy and its power and grace makes it a natural for Web professionals. It is a bit harder to learn, making it less suitable to novices. Furthermore, its Macintosh-like interface with distracting floating toolbars is not for everyone. However, this was the Ferrari of Web graphics tools for 1999.



Judge: John Hilvert

Price: $379
Distributor: Firmware Design
Contact: 1 800 060 357
URL: www.firmware.com.au

TurboCAD Designer 2D/3D

MULTIMEDIA AUTHORING PROGRAM

More grunt

Computer-aided design programs have generally been on the pricey side. In April we reviewed the merits of entry-level offerings suitable for students or cash-strapped businesses.

TurboCAD Designer 2D/3D has a lot going for it, although it's effectively TurboCAD with a reduced command set and no programming language. While its online tutorial and printed make the package novice-friendly, its major achievements are its inclusion of true 3D solid modelling capabilities and its bargain-basement price. This is adequate for basic engineering-style solid modelling and rendering. The program comes with a generous library of symbols (pre-drawn objects) in 2D and 3D. Although they appear in imperial measurements, you can set the scale to metric before dragging and dropping them into your design.

It's aimed at students and hobbyists, but TurboCAD Designer 2D/3D may be adequate for mainstream work as well.

Judge: Tony Zillies

Price: $99.95
Distributor: IMSI Australia
Contact: (02) 9319 7533
URL: www.imsi.com.au/

Mediator 5 Pro

BEST MULTIMEDIA AUTHORING TOOL

Happy medium

Mediator 5 is an easy program to use, with intuitive drag-and-drop or right-click menus for most operations.

You can add a background image, buttons, text, shapes, video window and more advanced objects like a bump map, list or text input box, animated GIF or animation path to each page.

The program features unique translucent 3D buttons and effects. Interactivity can be added with events for mouseclicks and rollovers, Show and Hide, and Drop Into for dragging objects

into one another. Actions include going to another page, showing or hiding an object and playing a sound, video clip, or CD audio track. Beyond this, you can apply programmed responses, create variables, IF-THEN-ELSE routines, draggable objects, respond to text input or launch an external program. You can also read and write external text and log files and interact with an SQL database. The level of programming included is quite good, making this much more powerful than most other entry-level authoring packages.

A good all-round program for those who want a versatile, entry-level multimedia authoring package.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: $795
Distributor: Lako Vision
Contact: 1800 657 601
URL: www.lakovision.com.au

Macromedia Director 7

BEST MULTIMEDIA AUTHORING PACKAGE

Direct the action

Director has always been at the head of the line in professional multimedia production. There are other worthy contenders, but Director's structure and strong Web integration makes it the tool to have for any serious multimedia developer.

Ideal for both CD-ROM development or Web, it is the only choice for hybrid ROM/Web applications, and ideal

cross-platform Mac/PC projects. Its power lies in its behaviour and plug-in architecture, which offer pre-built code and functions you can just drop into place. Beyond this, serious programmers can get into its Lingo language for real control over the environment.

Macromedia's Shockwave technology is the closest thing to a standard for multimedia on the Web, and the only way to create it is with Director or its sister program, Flash. You can embed Flash animations in Director to add all the vector art possibilities of this program as well.

This program can be used for tutorials and presentations as well as commercial CD-ROM applications, games and special interactive Web applications. Easy to get started with, but it can take a long time to learn and use most effectively.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: $1895
Distributor: Firmware Interactive
Contact: (02) 4721 7211
URL: www.firmware.com.au

Cakewalk Pro Audio Deluxe 8.0

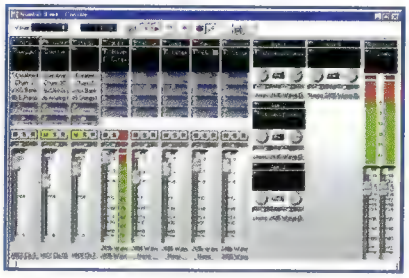
BEST MUSIC COMPOSITION TOOL

It's a cakewalk

Cakewalk claims to be the biggest selling program of its kind and it's designed for Windows from the start. Cubase has long had a strong reputation for professional quality, mostly on the Mac, though it seems to have lost favour lately. Logic, from emagic, also has a long lineage from the Atari and Mac, and seems to be the most popular choice among serious musicians in recent years. All are available in 32-bit Windows versions. There are other choices, but these are the big three.

The choice comes down mostly to personal preference and working methods. All are excellent programs and all have their good and bad points.

Having said that, my choice goes to Cakewalk Pro Audio Deluxe 8.0. I have found it to be very reliable and the least fussy about how your system is configured. It has built-in support for



SoundFonts, several professional HDR systems (hard-disk recording), DirectX audio plug-ins, and performs well with multiple tracks of audio and real-time effects, even off a basic Ultra/ATA drive.

Perfect for multimedia composition, as well as recording your next hit CD.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: $695; academic and institutional discounts $499 and $429 respectively
Distributor: Intelliware
Contact: 1300 652 172
URL: www.intelliware.com.au; www.cakewalk.com

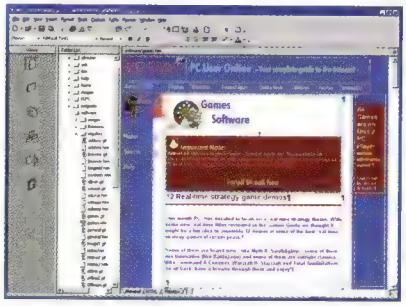
Microsoft Frontpage 2000

BEST WEB AUTHORING PACKAGE

Front of the queue

A controversial choice, perhaps, but the fact is that FrontPage, for all its quirks and faults, is still an excellent Web authoring tool at a very affordable price. And this new version does just about everything most people would need to design and build a Web site easily. No HTML coding required, though you can get your hands dirty with it if you want to.

It supports 'Better-than-Notepad HTML', which ensures your code remains intact if you add any code man-



ually or import an existing page or site. There is improved database support (particularly with Access), and good site-wide reporting and repair options. And if your server supports the FrontPage Extensions, you can add forms, a search engine and other basic interactive Web tools available as BOTS in FrontPage, and the Include BOT is invaluable.

Full support for Dynamic HTML means you can position objects anywhere on a page to pixel accuracy, add animations, and create JavaScript mouse events. Not as powerful as Macromedia Dreamweaver, perhaps, but easier to use and still a very worthwhile program.

Judge: Philip Moore

Price: Only available, at this stage, in MS Office Premium Edition $1339
Distributor: Microsoft Australia
Contact: 132 058
URL: www.microsoft.com/frontpage

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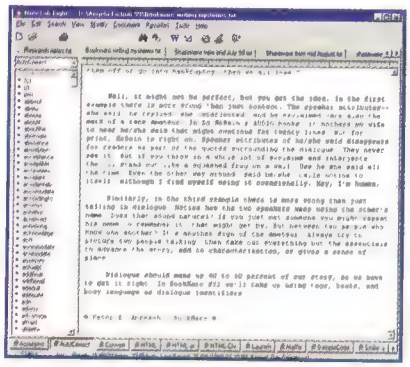
NoteTab Light 4.6a

Get productive

This is a great free tool. It opens an unlimited number of files of any size at once, and accessing your files is easy. Its best features are drag-and-drop editing, unlimited undo/redo, and an autocorrect feature similar to Microsoft Word's. You can even use the program as a clipboard enhancer, as any document can be used as a pasteboard to capture all text from the clipboard.

Judge: David Flynn

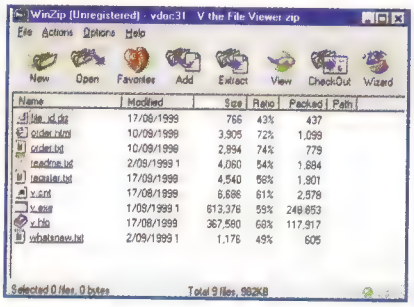


From: Eric G.V. Fookes
Registered price: Free
URL: www.notetab.com

WinZip 7.0 SR-1

Filing cabinet

A file archiver is a useful thing to have. WinZip makes creating and managing file archives a snap. The program's outstanding features include support for all popular archive formats, commands accessible via the right-click context menu, automatic installa-



tion of downloaded archives, automatic virus checking, helpful wizards for new users and Favourite Zip folders, which searches out and lists all zip files on your hard drives.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

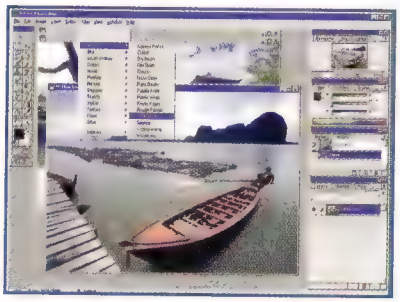
From: Nico Mak Computing
Registered price: $US29
URL: www.winzip.com

Paint Shop Pro 5.01

In the studio

Paint Shop Pro is a must-have, easy-to-use image editing and management tool. It edits all popular image formats, and its best features include a multi-level Undo with Undo history; image layers, which let you edit selected areas of an image; support for CMYK colour separations and output; an Explorer-like file browser, including image preview; and anti-aliasing on objects. Included with the program is Animation Shop, which creates and edits animated GIF files.

Judge: Julian Schoffel



From: Communique Software
Registered price: $169
URL: www.comm-unique.com.au; www.jasc.com/

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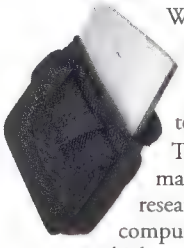

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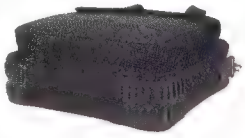

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Independent tests in Australia and the US have shown that Targus cases containing the Air Cushion System withstand greater G-Force impact and stress levels than our competitors cases.

NB. Carry bags for sub-notebooks contain EVA foam only protection.

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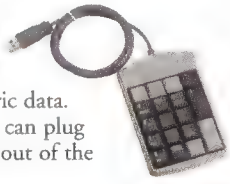

Targus 18-Key USB Slimline Numeric keypad is ideal for applications that require fast and accurate entry of numeric data. Fully compatible with Windows 98 you can plug the keypad into your USB port straight out of the box and go to work instantly!

Targus Accessories & Special Education Cases (for Toshiba, NEC, ACER & other notebooks) can be purchased from your local Education Reseller.

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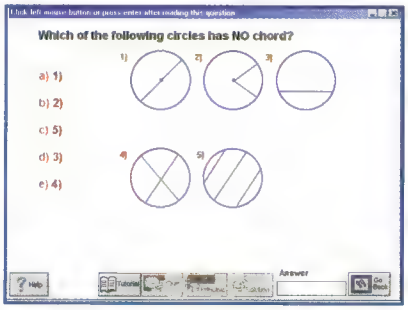


for students to answer onscreen, and clearly explained solutions.

In conjunction with a good textbook, this CD from Memory Banks can be used by Australian students to make a significant difference to their understanding and enjoyment of maths.

Judge: Linda Bruce

Price: $199
Distributor: Memory Banks
Contact: (03) 9770 1615
URL: www.memorybanks.com.au

Fisher-Price Ready For School

BEST MULTI-SYSTEM PROGRAM

Look mum, no mouse

One of the only programs available that children under four years old can use without a mouse. As such, in terms of toddler friendliness, it is even better than Fisher-Price Toddler and the recently released Reader Rabbit Playtime for Baby, both of which offer delightful activities tailored to toddlers. However, although babies can play in activities simply using the keyboard, changing between activites still requires assistance from someone who can use the mouse.

Overall, Fisher Price Ready For School Reading wins. The opening screen caters for two to five-year-olds by offering players the choice of playing with or without a mouse, and playing sequentially or freely through the three activities. Games teach letter

recognition, sentence completion and rhyming and listening, which are all great for building vocabulary and basic reading skills.

Judge: Linda Bruce

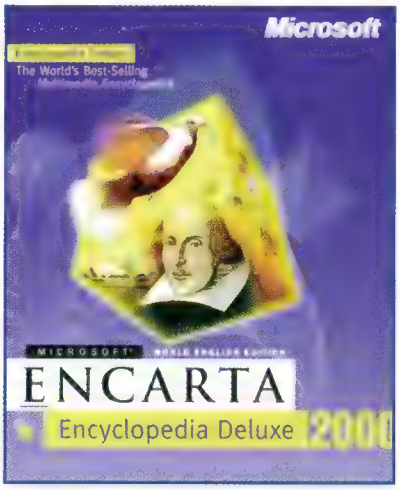
Price: $59.95
Distributor: Dataflow
Contact: (02)9417 9700
URL: www.dataflow.com.au

Encarta 2000 Reference Suite

BEST CD-ROM FOR REFERENCE

Everything you need

This great reference CD combines Encarta Encyclopedia 2000, the superb Encarta Interactive World Atlas 2000 and the new Encarta World English Dictionary. All of these have been updated from the 1999 versions. The Encarta Encyclopedia 2000 has leapt ahead of its competitors by streamlining its search function, making words within articles easier to locate, and including the option of having articles read to you and the ability to view all text in three different sizes.



The Encarta World Atlas now includes 1.8 million easily accessible locations, 22 map styles and the ability to edit and annotate maps. The newly created dictionary, combined with the fact that this World English Edition reference suite is one of the few reference products tailored for British, Australian and New Zealand users, makes Encarta 2000 Reference Suite a winner.

Judge: Linda Bruce

Price: $199
Distributor: Express Data
Contact: (02) 9598 9100
URL: www.expressdata.com.au

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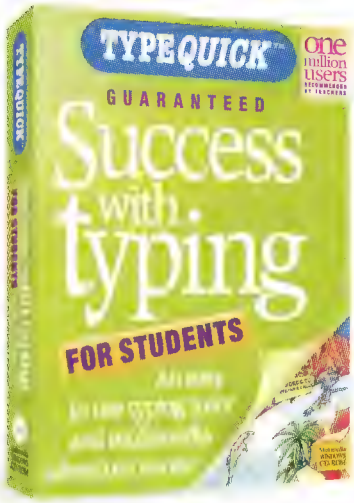

TEACHERS RECOMMEND IT!

A giant step forward in typing tutorial programs
Peter Rowan, M.Ed, Vic

CRITICS RAVE ABOUT IT!

This is more than a typing tutor, it's an interactive movie with sensational animation and witty prose.
Cathy Kennedy, APC, July 1997

Typequick has revolutionised learning to touch type ... it's the easiest and most amusing way to increase your keyboard skills and productivity
Linda Bruce, The Australian, July 5, 1997

PARENTS LOVE IT!

My kids love the course. Joshua is already at 25 wpm and Rachel is at 16 wpm.
Sue Higgs, MiddlePark, Qld.

10-finger typists are four times as productive as 2-finger typists.

Half-Life 'Game of the Year' Edition

Long-lived

The 3D action genre is probably the most competitive of all PC gaming areas. Populated in the past by the likes of Quake, Quake II, Jedi Knight and Unreal, the good old-fashioned 3D shooter underwent something of a renaissance at the beginning of this year. While these sort of games used to follow one basic design blueprint — construct a few levels, populate them with mutants and then

have the player blow everything away with a wicked assortment of firepower — all of this changed with titles like Thief: The Dark Project and, of course, Half-Life. While it was hard to choose between them, Half-Life's incredibly atmospheric and evocative gameworld, slick graphics and a very savvy use of scripted events made it our pick for the best 3D action game. To celebrate being named 'Game of the Year' by over 40 publications, Sierra has released this special edition of Half-Life, which features all patch updates as well as the Team Fortress add-on. Another contender worthy of note was the recently released Descent 3, which sticks pretty much to the old-style 3D action gameplay formula, but does it all with undeniable flair and panache.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $69.95
Distributor: Dataflow
Contact: (02) 9417 9710
URL: www.dataflow.com.au

Starcraft Battlechest

Seeing stars

This year has seen a flood of new real-time strategy games in an over-crowded market. Although we held high hopes for Kingdoms, it turned out to be mediocre at best. At the moment, we're putting Tiberian Sun through its paces, but again, initial impressions aren't particularly favourable, giving rise to the question: just what has Westwood Studios been doing for the past four years? In the face of all these disappointments, one real-time strategy title has enjoyed amazing success and longevity, not least because of its incredibly addictive multi-player component. This is, of course, Starcraft, which enjoyed a healthy kick in the buttocks with the release of the add-on pack Brood War, adding more units and tweaked gameplay mechanics. The game's magnificent strategic balance, crisp visuals and excellent interface continue to make it the best real-time strategy

game currently available. The special 'Starcraft Battlechest' version contains the original game and the Brood War add-on. Keep your eyes open for Homeworld and Dark Reign II, which look promising and are scheduled for release in the next few months.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $79.95
Distributor: Dataflow
Contact: (02) 9417 9710
URL: www.dataflow.com.au

Baldur's Gate

Baldur the beautiful

This has been a big year for role-playing games. The genre has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity with titles like Might & Magic VII, Fallout 2 and, more recently, System Shock 2. One game in particular has made a huge impact worldwide: Baldur's Gate. Set in the AD&D 'Forgotten Realms' gaming universe, it features a truly massive gameworld and a very involving storyline. Players have the opportunity to generate a character from a large array of AD&D classes and develop them as

the game progresses. The pre-rendered graphics and ambient sound effects generate loads of atmosphere and the designers have successfully recreated the AD&D role-playing system down to the finest detail. Players can also link up with friends online and play the game cooperatively. Not since the first two Eye of the Beholder games have I found myself so hopelessly addicted to a computer RPG! Another contender worthy of note is the excellent 3D sci-fi game System Shock 2, created by the same folks responsible for Ultima Underworld 1 & 2, so be sure to check out our full review in this issue.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $79.95
Distributor: Interplay
Contact: (02) 9959 1074
URL: www.interplay.com

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X-Wing Alliance

BEST SPACE COMBAT SIMULATION

Star Wars winner

Things have been a bit quiet on the space combat front of late. Since the release of Origin's Wing Commander Prophecy, along with Descent Freespace from Interplay, there's really only been one other title of particular note: X-Wing Alliance. Thankfully, the latter is a great game which successfully brings down the curtain on what has surely been one of the definitive series of

classic space combat simulations. To address the gripes usually associated with the much-maligned X-Wing vs TIE Fighter game, LucasArts has focused on creating an enthralling Star Wars plot-line for the single-player campaign of X-Wing Alliance. Assuming the role of shipping merchant Ace Azzameen, the player is gradually drawn into the Empire/Rebel Alliance conflict. The game uses 3D acceleration to great effect, creating marvellously fluid and crisp in-flight visuals. With its slick presentation, involving single-player campaign and solid multiplayer functionality, X-Wing Alliance has our vote for the best space combat simulation. But then, we always were suckers for a good Star Wars game.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $79.95
Distributor: Metro Games
Contact: (03) 9329 2999
URL: www.metrogames.com.au

Falcon 4.0

BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION

Bird of prey

Widely regarded as some of the most technically accurate military flight simulations available for the PC, the Falcon series produced a new version this year: Falcon 4.0. While Falcon 4.0 copped plenty of bad press early on due to the extremely bug-riddled first release, subsequent patches have addressed many of the problems. The game features several modes of play, ranging from instant action to dogfights, tactical engagements and a fully dynamic campaign set on the Korean Peninsula. Other features, like realistic radio chatter and the fact that most of the buttons, dials and switches in your cockpit actually function, help make Falcon 4.0 one of the most engaging flight simulations on the market. It also supports software graphics acceleration, Direct3D and Glide, resulting in a stunning array of visual detail. The graphics and overall gameplay make this an essential addition to

any serious desk pilot's collection. Another title worthy of note is European Air War, also from Microprose; with great visuals and a realistic flight model, this WWII flight sim allows air combats on a truly grand scale!

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $79.95
Distributor: Hasbro Interactive
Contact: (02) 9953 8788
URL: www.microprose.com

The Curse of Monkey Island

BEST GRAPHIC ADVENTURE GAME

Monkey business

That a game from early 1998 still qualifies as our pick says much about the state of the genre, which was once hugely popular but has been on the decline. The best originated from two main publishers: Sierra and LucasArts. Games like Monkey Island 1 & 2, Full Throttle, King's Quest, Space Quest, Leisure Suit Larry and Day of the Tentacle all bring back fond memories. Since then, 3D action shooters have all but sucked the life out of the genre. However, if recent games like Half-Life or Thief: The Dark Project

are any indication, we may be about to witness the birth of a new adventure/action hybrid. That said, we've chosen an adventure game built on the 'classic' formula as our reigning champion. The Curse of Monkey Island (the third episode of this classic series) is an extremely funny and engaging game which casts the player in the role of Guybrush Threepwood. Those who played the original games will be happy to learn that many old characters (like the Voodoo Lady and Stan the 'Used Coffin Salesman') make a return appearance. While it is a classic, players yearning for something new should look out for Gabriel Knight 3 from Sierra.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $49.95
Distributor: Metro Games
Contact: (03) 9329 2999
URL: www.metrogames.com.au

Heroes of Might & Magic III

BEST TURN-BASED STRATEGY GAME

Evolving magic

Heroes of Might & Magic II was a superb game because it was simple and accessible, yet had a lot of depth and an extremely clever interface. For the sequel, the developers at first promised a radical retooling of the original, with a new interface and lots of changes to the basic gameplay formula. However, all of this was eventually abandoned in favour of a more prag-

matic approach, and the resulting game, Heroes of Might & Magic III, is probably best described as evolutionary rather than revolutionary. In Heroes III, the player controls a fantasy empire (either good or evil — it's your choice) in a number of story-driven campaigns. With its combination of improved AI, new units, slicker graphics and a plethora of subtle gameplay refinements, Heroes III reigns supreme in the arena of turn-based strategy. Gamers looking for a more cerebral package may like to sample one of the more complex turn-based offerings like Alpha Centauri, Civilization: Call to Power or SimCity 3000.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $79.95
Distributor: Jack of all Games
Contact: (02) 9482 3455
URL: www.3do.com

FIFA 99

BEST SPORTS SIMULATION

Armchair sport

Strangely enough, sporting simulations for the PC constitute one of the most popular gaming genres. I guess there are a lot of people out there who prefer the comfort of their armchairs to the real thing. As there are so many games available, relating to a multitude of different sports, our choice of game had to be fairly subjective. However, when it comes to the slickness of the overall package you'll find it hard to beat EA Sports titles. With that in mind, we've chosen FIFA 99 as our pick for best sporting game. It's difficult to believe that EA Sports could improve on last year's FIFA instalment, but somehow they have succeeded; FIFA 99 provides better visuals, more commentary, improved AI (artificial intelligence) and tweaked sideline control. The fluid, challenging gameplay remains intact, and the added strategic options further

entrenches its position as leader of the pack. If golf is your thing, you might like to try Links LS 99, which builds on the gorgeous graphics, excellent interface and realistic ball physics of its predecessors, and is undoubtedly the best golf sim on the market.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $49.95
Distributor: Electronic Arts
Contact: (02) 9955 7744
URL: www.easports.com

Need for Speed 3: Hot Pursuit

BEST RACING SIMULATION

White-knuckle fun

Providing the player with the opportunity to drive any of 11 supercars on nine tracks, Need for Speed 3: Hot Pursuit fills the gap between a true driving simulation and an arcade game. With a polished interface and superb 3D graphics, the cars in Need for Speed 3 are heaps of fun to drive and pursuit mode is a buzz. If you're a driving purist, you might want a bit more technical accuracy, but for the rest of us, Need for Speed 3 offers hours of white-knuckle entertainment. For those

of you who require a greater degree of challenge along with a liberal dose of racing nostalgia, Grand Prix Legends from Sierra is also worth a mention. This game puts you in the cockpit of a 1967 Formula One racing car. This was a time before the sport was constrained by any concerns for the safety of the drivers or fans, when cars had 400-plus horsepower and no down-force. Be warned, though: Grand Prix Legends is a realistic simulation, not just a game, so if you like to jump into the most powerful car and be competitive immediately, you're probably better off with something like the aforementioned Need for Speed 3.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

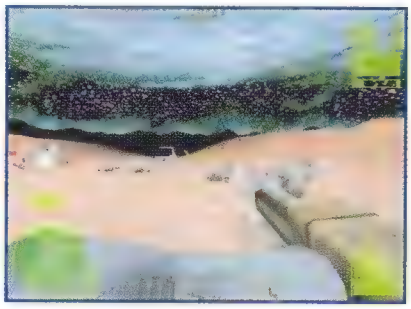
Price: $79.95
Distributor: Electronic Arts
Contact: (02) 9955 7744
URL: www.ea.com/eastudios/

Heavy Gear II

BEST COMBAT SIMULATION

Kitted up

Like feature films, PC games of the same genre always seem to arrive in clusters. We currently have three big mech combat simulations on the market fighting it out for top honours: MechWarrior 3, Starseige and Heavy Gear II. Unlike the MechWarrior games, players don't control a hulking mechanised leviathan in Heavy Gear II. The gears themselves are really high-tech suits of armour kitted out with an impressive array of firepower. Because of this, gameplay in Heavy Gear II has a distinctly different feel from that of its competitors. Combat is faster and more in-your-face compared with the almost flight sim-like level of detachment which often pervades other mech-style games. The game uses Activision's new 'Dark Side' engine, resulting in some very



detailed and impressive visuals. Players can engage in a story-driven single-player campaign, along with historical missions or instant action. Multiplayer support via a LAN or the Internet is also included. With its faster, more fluid gameplay, Heavy Gear II gets our vote for best combat simulation, but MechWarrior 3 runs a close second.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

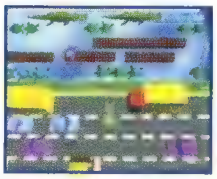
Price: $89.95
Distributor: Dataflow
Contact: (02) 9417 9710
URL: www.dataflow.com.au

Frogger

BEST ARCADE GAME

Playing leapfrog

Frogger, from Hasbro Interactive, is one of the gems of the recent retro craze for arcade classics. Armed with new moves, a power croak, a heat-seeking tongue and a super jump, the little green bugger is back in fine form. Frogger requires an almost superhuman



degree of dexterity if you are to help him navigate obstacles like polluted ponds, hostile deserts and dark caves, and outsmart the host of deadly new enemies, which includes crocodiles, lawnmowers, turtles and snakes. Basic gameplay is fairly consistent with the original Frogger, with the addition of nine new worlds and 40 extra levels for players to negotiate. The whole shebang has been given a slick 3D makeover, but a large portion of music and sound effects have been taken from the original. It's definitely one of the most engaging arcade games around.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $29.95
Distributor: Hasbro Interactive
Contact: (02) 9953 8788
URL: www.microprose.com

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

BEST ADVENTURE GAME

Riddle me this

These games tend to depend too much on pretty but non-interactive visuals; obtuse puzzles and little for the player to get excited about, and all too often they degenerate into a formula. However, this one breaks away from the formula in an entertaining way. For what are essentially puzzle-based side-scrollers, the Oddworld games boast involving storylines, a prodigious cast of tragic and diabolical characters, and a very unlikely hero. Abe is the saviour of the downtrodden Mudokon race and

nemesis of the evil money-lusting Glukkons. The game contains a blend of mind-bending puzzles and fast-paced action in a darkly humorous atmosphere. Success lies in understanding the languages and behavioural patterns of its weird inhabitants, and there's nothing else like it.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

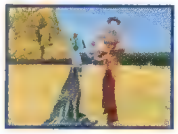
Price: $59.95
Distributor: GT Interactive
Contact: (02) 9902 3000
URL: www.gtinteractive.com

EverQuest

BEST MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAME

The fun never stops

EverQuest is a massive online game where players customise a character, then interact with hundreds of other players in a huge, diverse environment. Considering the game's superb 3D-accelerated visuals,



lag levels are surprisingly good. Another game worth checking out is Ultima Online from Electronic Arts. The game allows players to lead a virtual life in a huge, evolving gameworld. While character customisation is unsurpassed, the game has been plagued by 'player killers'. Lag can also be a problem, although this is being improved.

Judge: Julian Schoffel

Price: $89.95
Distributor: Hilad
Contact: (02) 9700 9377
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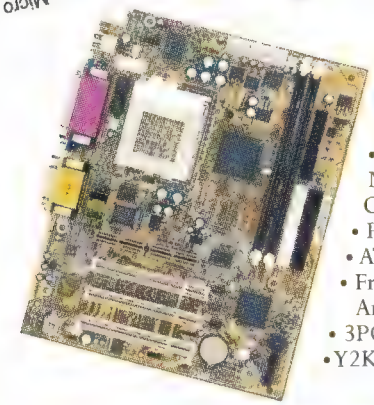

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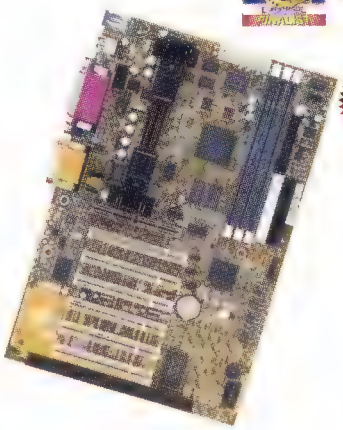

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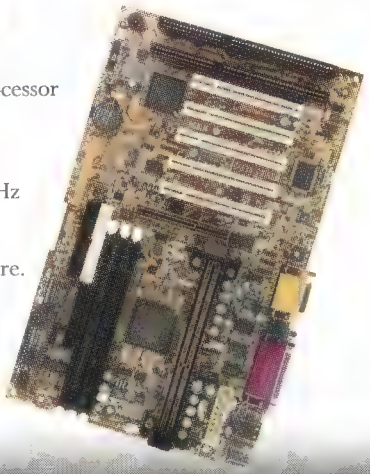

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Prepare to be shocked!

System Shock 2

GENRE SCI-FI RPG

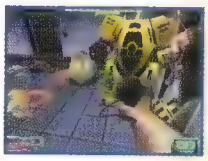
The original System Shock was an excellent first-person sci-fi RPG, let down only by frustrating sojourns into the game's wire-frame depictions of 'cyberspace'. Five years later, the folks at Looking Glass Studios have decided it's time for a new instalment.

While System Shock 2 (SS2) borrows from many sources (a touch of *Aliens* here, a spot of *2001* there), the result is an enthralling and creepy tale involving an ill-fated excursion into deep space. After being assigned a tour of duty on board the Von Braun (a gigantic starship), your character awakens from cryogenic slumber only to discover that the ship has become infested with a strange alien life-form, and Xerxes, the Von Braun's central computer system, also appears to have developed a rather antisocial personality. Suffering from amnesia, your character becomes totally reliant on a mysterious figure (known as Dr Polito) who communicates instructions via your com system. Your mission is to find out what the hell happened to all the unfortunate folks aboard the Von Braun. Thankfully, while you were in sleepyland, some kind soul has taken the liberty of bestowing a set of cybernetic implants upon you, which provide some very nifty special abilities. So what are you waiting for? Go to work, soldier.

In System Shock 2 players can evolve their characters in a variety of ways. Available skills and enhancements cover everything from computer hacking to weapons and psionics.

Using an enhanced version of the 'Thief' game engine, System Shock 2 (SS2) does a great job of simulating the cramped interiors of a massive starship. At the start of the game, you can enlist in one of three military organisations: the Navy, O.S.A. or Marines. This dictates what sort of skills your character possesses initially from the basic categories of technical (hacking, modifying and so on), weapons (standard, heavy, exotic and so on) or psionics (which include a whole slew of unique mind powers). As the game progresses, you get access to additional cyber modules and software upgrades, allowing you to beef up your characters' skill levels in any area.

Early parts of the game consist of performing various tasks assigned by the enigmatic Dr Polito. Although she's downright bossy, she directs you around the ship and warns you of impending danger. You'll also come across numerous e-mail logs from the ship's missing crew scattered around the place. These further flesh out the story and provide important information pertaining to various level goals, so make sure you read them all. The game uses a few key scripted events similar to Half-Life, and while these add a touch of drama, there is virtually no direct interaction with any of the crew members themselves (at least while they're still human, that is). At the risk of divulging a major plot spoiler, I will also say that 'SHODAN', the deranged computer intelligence from the original game, makes a return appearance.



System Shock 2 is one of the creepiest PC games I've ever played. Here a maintenance droid proves that it is possible for a robot to look grumpy.

SS2 deviates from the usual 3D shooter game mechanics in a number of ways. For starters, the skill system permeates every aspect of gameplay, forcing you to take a more multi-dimensional approach. Say, for example, you need to conserve valuable ammo for a weapon you're particularly skilled at using; why not hack the security system instead and reprogram that

Classification: MA15+
Price: $89.95
From: Electronic Arts (02) 9955 7744
System requirements: P200, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, 200Mb hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.1), 4Mb Direct3D compatible 3D card

Graphics: ●●●
Sound: ●●●●●
Gameplay: ●●●●
Overall value: ●●●●

handily placed gun turret to kill your enemies for you? The game rewards lateral and innovative strategies, and players just can't rely on the usual 'run around and blast everything that moves' approach. While the 3D graphics aren't quite cutting-edge, the gaming environment is detailed and interactive, and whether it's the 'Shopping Mall', 'Hydroponics' lab or 'Reactor Core', each area feels distinctive and authentic.

Like Thief, SS2 uses sound to generate huge wads of atmosphere. In fact, I would go so far as to say that I have never before been quite so freaked out by the audio in a PC game; from the deranged and sinister ramblings of a prowling 'Hybrid' to the maniacal howls of a berserk 'Psionic Monkey', SS2 can make you reach for Mr Teddy or plonk the old thumb in your mouth on a regular basis!

However, the game is not without its flaws, and the initial release version we played crashed on a number of occasions. Apart from the bugs, savegames took ages to load and the auto-save slot was irritatingly written over whenever you entered a new level. Another annoying feature is the way monsters constantly re-spawn — I was often rather bemused to see a 'Hybrid' or a 'Rumbler' warp in from nowhere. However, Looking Glass has promised a patch addressing these problems which will also add support for multiplayer cooperative play.

All in all, System Shock 2 is a vast and extremely entertaining role-playing/action hybrid reminiscent of Half-Life with more than a splash of Ultima Underworld and Thief thrown in for good measure. Highly recommended. Be sure to check out the game guide below for a few hints and tips.

Julian Schoffel

The cyborg assassins in System Shock 2 are quick and deadly opponents. But two or three shots with an EMP rifle and they're toast.

System Shock 2 survival guide

- Don't be too concerned about which career path you choose at the start of the game; later on you'll receive additional cyber upgrade modules which can be used to improve skills in any area.
- However, that said, it is wise to have a smattering of technical and physical combat skills early on, when weapons are scarce and hacking security systems to avoid cameras and turrets is a major priority. For this reason, try to improve your strength and endurance statistics and get the Level 2 hack skill as soon as possible. This will allow you to harvest the goodies from Level 2 security crates.
- If you choose to focus on the combat skill, try to distribute points initially to the standard, energy and heavy weapons attributes. Once you have two levels in these areas, start to focus on one in particular. I highly recommend the standard and energy categories, because weapons and ammo of these types are probably the most commonly available.
- If you focus on psionics, don't ignore your strength and endurance stats. Strength is particularly useful because it opens up more of your inventory slots.
- Make sure you are proficient with at least one form of melee weapon (for example, wrench, laser rapier, crystal shard). These weapons don't use ammo and are particularly effective against hybrids and lab monkeys. Remember, you'll often need a ranged weapon to take out security cameras or berserk protocol androids from a safe distance.
- If you do use a melee weapon on a maintenance or assault robot, protocol android, turret or alien annelid, always finish it off with a ranged weapon. All of these do explosive damage when destroyed or killed, so you want to be out of the danger area when it happens.
- Don't ignore the research skill. Researching objects or alien body parts can open up new avenues for weapons, healing or cyber-boost implants, and weapon damage on researched enemies is usually increased by 25%. Read the lab reports, as they often tell you which weapon will have the most effect.
- Always read any e-mail logs you find and then check your notes. Level goals are often added or altered with the additional information you pick up.
- Be frugal with your nanites. They are the game's main currency and are used for everything from healing and hacking to repairing and modifying weapons.
- Watch out for the autosave feature, as it automatically rewrites whenever you enter a new level.
- Leave chemicals in the various storerooms; once you pick up the chemical log, you can always check it and revisit the relevant storeroom to pick up the chemical you need. If you stash them all over the place, you're liable to forget which chemical is where.
- Once the elevators have been restored, don't be afraid to backtrack a little when you need healing or recharging. Revisit a known surgical unit or power recharge station, rather than venturing into unexplored territory in a weakened state.

System Shock 2 cheat codes

Hit the 'Shift' and ';' (semicolon) keys together, then type the following codes:

Cheat code	Effect
psi_full	Give the player full psi points
Ubermensch	Turn the player into homo superior
add_pool	Give player additional build pool points
show_version	Display version in game mode
toggle_inv	Toggle inv panel
cycle_ammo	Cycle through available ammo types
toggle_compass	Toggle compass state
Query	Query cursor 1 = on 0 = off
Split	Split cursor 1 = on 0 = off
shock_jump_player	Jump the player
look_cursor	Puts cursor into look mode
reload_gun	Reloads weapon out of inventory
swap_guns	Switches primary and secondary weapons
wpn_setting_toggle	Toggles between weapon settings
select_psipower	Brings up the psi power selection MFD
equip_weapon	Searches your inv for a particular weapon and equips it
cycle_weapon	Cycles through next weapon, 1 for fwd, -1 for back
psi_power	Acts like the 1-5 level buttons
open_mfd	Open up an MFD by overlay constant
stop_email	Stop any currently playing email/log
clear_teleport	Clear any existing teleport marker
Quickbind	Bind a quick slot
Quickuse	Activate a quick slot
use_obj	Use an object by name
msg_history	Toggle message history
play_unread_log	Play an unread log

More System Shock 2 cheat codes

Hit the 'Shift' and ';' (semicolon) keys together, then type: Summon_obj [item]. Choose from the list of items below:

System Shock 2 items

medical kit
psi amp
wrench
pistol
shotgun
assault rifle
laser pistol
ap clip
he clip
standard clip
pellet shot box
rifled slug box
large worm beaker
detox patch
psi booster
reflec armor
french-epstein device
portable battery
maintenance tool
hack soft v3
repair soft v3
research soft v3
modify soft v3
EMP Rifle
Electro Shock
Gren Launcher
Stasis Field Generator
Fusion Cannon
Crystal Shard
Viral Prolif
Worm Launcher

- When you backtrack, don't waste ammo clearing out a level again. Monsters constantly re-spawn, so you're better off running past them whenever possible.
- Be innovative. Many of the game's toughest situations can be approached in a variety of ways.
- At certain points in the game you come across special OS upgrade units. Each can only be used once, with a total of four OS upgrades available in the entire game. Save one of these upgrade slots for the cybernetically enhanced ability. This comes in very handy later in the game where you can use two cybernetic implants at once.
- Sometimes you will find a weapon or object which requires a very hefty minimum skill requirement. If you are one skill level away, some cybernetic implants will temporarily boost your stat to the required level. That way you can use valuable cyber upgrade units for other purposes; remember that it takes 42 cyber upgrade modules to attain the maximum skill level in any given area, so use them wisely!

An assault robot from System Shock 2. Hey, he looks pissed off.

Creature weaknesses

- Hybrids and lab monkeys are very vulnerable to melee weapons like the wrench, laser rapier and crystal shard.
- All robots and turrets are particularly susceptible to the EMP rifle. This is also true of midwives and cyborg assassins.
- Use a ranged weapon on alien annelids you come across; anything with armour piercing or anti-personnel ammo will usually do the trick with one or two shots.
- The viral proliferator works a treat on those pesky toxic arachnids; just make sure you switch it to the hybrid setting before use, or you'll incur major damage.
- Rumblers are particularly susceptible to incendiary grenades.
- Don't waste too much ammo on those things which look like floating squid brains. They are psionic projections and will keep regenerating until you find and destroy the nearby brain node.
- Finally, to kill the end of game boss, you must first destroy the floating stars.

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Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun

GENRE REAL-TIME STRATEGY

The next instalment

Tiberian Sun (TS) is the sequel to one of the most popular PC games ever: Command & Conquer (C&C). I was expecting the game to be a revolutionary successor to the 'big daddy' of real-time strategy, but it's not.

Presentation: It's been about four years since C&C came out and TS looks, um, wrinkly and decrepit. Despite the much-touted 'voxel' graphics, TS doesn't look anywhere near as good as it could. Sure, there are some pretty FMV/rendered cut-scenes between missions, but who cares? While the buildings are quite crisp, clear and detailed, they set up a nasty contrast with some antlike infantry units and fuzzy-looking vehicles. The new coloured lighting effects are quite nice, as are the explosions and fire animations.

Interface: Almost identical to C&C. Omissions like the ability to see units in the menu bar detract from the intuitiveness of the game. Why couldn't they have implemented a system where you can easily select similar units by double-clicking and then deploy them from the menu?

Artificial intelligence: A mixture; sometimes the computer appears fairly wily, but then it will do something really stupid. And why hasn't Westwood included an option comparable to Starcraft's 'Attack Ground' command? I watched in disbelief as many of my units were mowed down on their way to a designated location without returning fire. It contains a 'Force Fire' manoeuvre, but it's no substitute. The new way-point system is cumbersome to use and a pain to cancel. Another problem is that building multiple 'Barracks' or 'War Factories' has no effect on the speed of overall unit production, and you are still limited to a maximum build queue of five units; surely players should be rewarded for allocating the extra time and resources.

Buildings and units: TS does feature a host of interesting new units and structures, along with some old favourites. On the NOD side we have 'Mutant Hijackers', 'Subterranean APCs', 'Banshee' aerial artillery and 'Tick Tanks'. GDI have 'Titans', 'Jump Jet Infantry', and rail gun-touting 'Ghostalkers', who can take out a line of enemy units with one shot (à la Quake II). This variety of new units (particularly the mutants) almost justifies buying the new game. Another new feature is the ability to blow up and repair bridges, which also provides interesting defensive/offensive strategic potential.

Sound effects and music: The game contains an array of ambient sound effects: the screams of dying men, mechanical clatter and the thud of explosions — all the usual stuff. But the music is horrible! It sounds like feeble elevator music.

Single-player: The game features two large campaigns where you can play from the NOD or GDI perspective. These follow a typical structure, progressively familiarising you with various units and becoming tougher. Some missions are complex affairs with multiple objectives, while others only allow access to limited units to fulfil goals. The single-player campaigns contain a heap of cinematic cut-scenes with key roles played by decent actors. However, you can't avoid the unfortunate contrast when a magnificent cut-scene, chock-full of high drama, leads straight into a mission built from a prehistoric-looking game-engine featuring tiddly-wink units.

Multiplayer: Ultimately, a real-time strategy game depends on the strength of its multiplayer component. The strategic possibilities of fresh units, and the allure of the Command & Conquer universe itself may be enough. The game features the usual array of modem, LAN and Internet play (the latter through Westwood Online). But despite all the new units, the winner is basically the person who builds the most 'Tiberium Refineries' and scores a nice patch of 'Blue Tiberium'.

If it seems like I'm being a bit harsh, it's because my expectations were so high. If you really, really loved the original, you'll probably enjoy Tiberian Sun. But if you expect anything innovative, you'll be disappointed.

Julian Schoffel

A few well-known actors pop up in Westwood's latest real-time strategy game, Tiberian Sun. So that's where they blew their design budget.

Classification: MA15+
Price: $89.95
From: Electronic Arts (02) 9955 7744
System requirements: P166, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, 200Mb hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.1), 4Mb SVGA graphics card

Graphics: ●●●
Sound: ●●●
Gameplay: ●●●
Overall value: ●●●

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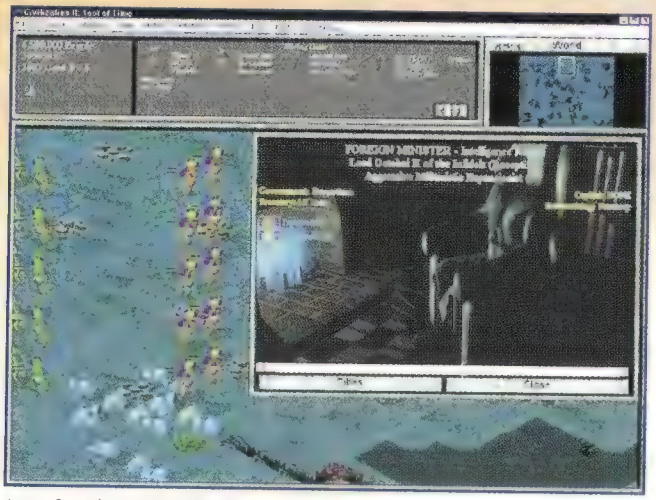
Civilization II: Test of Time

GENRE TURN-BASED STRATEGY

Now, be civilised

In this incarnation, as previously, you establish your civilisation and build a political, economic and social empire, but Test of Time also lets you play fantasy and science fiction-inspired versions of the original.

If you have played any previous versions of Civilization II, you will feel at home with this — perhaps too much, as it hasn't changed all that much. The three variations are more polished, however, and have better audio. The familiar formula is still here, but the fantasy and sci-fi games are a bit different, featuring new technologies and different unit, race and terrain types, and it lets you play on several connected maps. In the sci-fi game, the maps are star systems, and in the fantasy mode they are different realms, adding more complexity, and magic and special quests also help. However, many of the new technologies and structures aren't fully explained, which is frustrating.



Apart from being inhabited by a variety of mythical creatures, the fantasy world of Civilization: Test of Time also allows players to use magic.

If you aren't a serious devotee, Test of Time might not be worth it; it just depends on how much you want the two new modes. If you haven't played Civilization before, you should definitely check it out.
Steve Polak

Classification: G
Price: $89.95
From: Hasbro Interactive (02) 9953 8788
System requirements: P166, 16Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, 60Mb hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.0), 2Mb SVGA graphics card

Graphics: ●●●
Sound: ●●●●
Gameplay: ●●●●
Overall value: ●●●

Hidden & Dangerous

GENRE REAL-TIME 3D SQUAD-BASED TACTICAL COMBAT

Out of the shadows

This is almost like being in a WWII movie. The game puts you in charge of a squad of soldiers, then catapults you through a series of varied mission campaigns in glorious 3D.

Getting killed is incredibly easy; it usually only takes one shot, so the game requires careful strategy, relying on stealth, position and equipment. The graphics are good but not great. They're not especially colourful or detailed, but they are very varied. Success lies in careful planning between missions, and you need to choose your squad members carefully.

Players must carefully choose their squad from a range of unsavoury-looking characters in the new tactical combat game Hidden & Dangerous. Looks like everyone took a grumpy pill this morning.

You can use the 3D viewing mode to switch between squad members or queue more complex orders using the overhead tactical map. When everything runs smoothly, H&D is a gem to play and you really feel the tension as you negotiate the scenarios full of German soldiers who want to see your ass mounted on the wall.

Unfortunately, things rarely run smoothly, as the game is let down by a number of weaknesses and bugs. The first is the cumbersome interface and ridiculous save/load system. A wacky, convoluted menu system can make outfitting your men a nightmare. Due to the high difficulty level, players often have to reload the savegame, which involves clicking back through many layers of the game's menu systems. The AI flaws mean that the squad members do incredibly stupid things like running straight out in front of a German soldier, falling off a bridge and drowning, or running under a train!

If it weren't for the huge slew of faults and flaws, Hidden & Dangerous would be a tremendous tactical combat game. In its current form, it's average at best. However, there is definitely enough potential here to justify a sequel.
Julian Schoffel

Classification: M15+
Price: $89.95
From: Jack of all Games (02) 9482 3455
System requirements: P166MMX, 16Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, 10Mb hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.1), Direct3D compatible 3D card

Graphics: ●●●●
Sound: ●●●●
Gameplay: ●●●
Overall value: ●●●

Jagged Alliance 2

GENRE TURN-BASED STRATEGY

Motley crew

Jagged Alliance 2 (JA2) puts the player in control of a bunch of bad-ass mercenaries. The main goal is to use this hired muscle to liberate a country from a ruthless dictator, but you also have to work out how to generate a little cash on the side.

You use a simulated in-game Internet to hire killers via e-mail (nothing new to me here — I do it all the time). Much of the fun is derived from the unique personalities of the mercs, and while some are just exaggerated stereotypes ripped straight out of movies like *Terminator* or *Rambo*, most are genuinely funny.

Like its predecessor, the basis of JA2 is turn-based combat, and the developers have implemented quite a few changes and improvements. In each turn, mercs have a certain number of points which can be distributed to various actions, ranging from movement and weapon use to climbing or crawling. The actions have a variety of modes and the player may choose to spend extra points on things like more accurate targeting or stealthier movement. The game switches to real-time when there is no enemy activity.

The campaign is split into different zones, but players must now train forces to protect captured towns while they're away kicking ass. The visuals aren't great, but they feature a fair amount of variety with some nice character animations. The inclusion of non-player characters adds a further element of interest to the game. The sounds are excellent, with the outspoken mercs providing the most entertainment.

While the visuals of Jagged Alliance 2 are by no means cutting-edge, they are more than compensated for by an addictive blend of compelling gameplay and witty dialogue.

All in all, Jagged Alliance 2 is a slick little package which succeeds at building on the strongest facets of the original game. Recommended.

Julian Schoffel

Classification: M15+
Price: $89.95
From: Jack of all Games (02) 9482 3455
System requirements: P133, 16Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.0), SVGA graphics card

Graphics: ●●●
Sound: ●●●●
Gameplay: ●●●●
Overall value: ●●●●

Might and Magic VII: For Blood and Honour

GENRE RPG

All brains and no looks

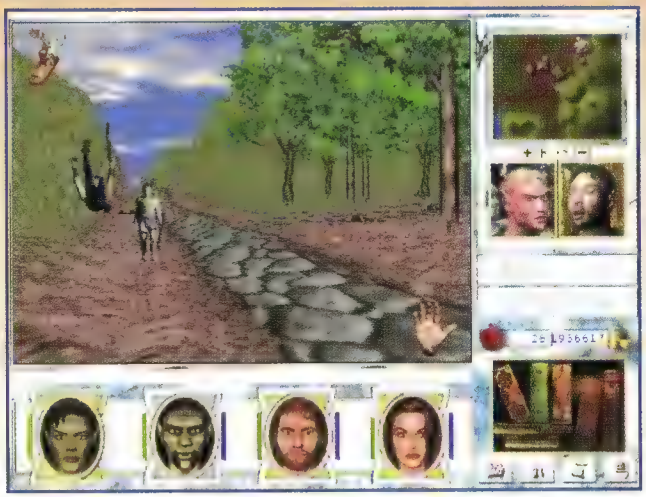
Considering the large gap between the previous two releases, it comes as rather a surprise to have Might and Magic VII (MM7) arrive so quickly, and the news is both good and bad.

The visuals are very disappointing — virtually identical to its predecessor, with a few minor tweaks and changes. Thankfully, the horrible digitised character portraits have been replaced. The game's supposed support for 3D cards yields only the most minor of improvements: slightly smoother terrain and some new lighting effects. Unfortunately, the sound effects suck.

The plot concerns a war between the human and elfin kingdoms over a disputed territory, and you have to align with one of them. There are myriad side-quests to embark on, monsters to kill, and treasures to pillage, but unlike MM6, you can now choose from non-human races such as dwarves or goblins.

Technologically, MM7 is only a minor improvement on its predecessor, but the new plot and various gameplay tweaks make it worthwhile for any role-playing aficionado who enjoys the classic 'hack and slash' questing formula.

Julian Schoffel



Might and Magic VII is classic, quest-based 'hack and slash' role-playing at its best. Shame about the crappy graphics.

Classification: M15+
Price: $89.95
From: Jack of all Games (02) 9482 3455
System requirements: P133, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, 350Mb hard disk space, Windows 95/98 or NT4.0 (DirectX 6.1), 8Mb Direct3D compatible 3D card recommended

Graphics: ●●●
Sound: ●●
Gameplay: ●●●●
Overall value: ●●●

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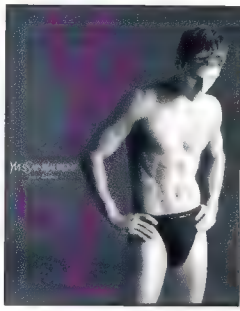

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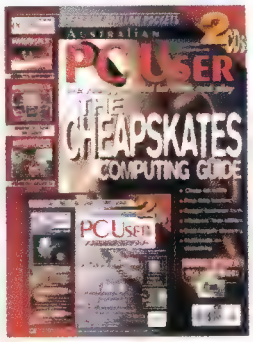

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Official Formula 1 Racing

GENRE F1 RACING

First gear only

A satisfying blend of arcade and sim action. Players can race against the likes of Michael Schumacher or Eddy Irvine, and while driver AI is challenging enough for a relative novice, I have encountered racing sim addicts who find it too easy.

There are single-player championships, quick race and single race options. The multiplayer features cover the usual gambit from one-on-one modem sessions to serial port and LAN games. Purists may be disappointed with the limited array of car setup options, and while you can adjust gear ratios, suspension and wing angles, the overall tweaking is not that good.

The graphics of OF1 stand up pretty well. A lot of effort has been put into modelling the tracks accurately, and the scenery is crisp, clear, and effective. The cars look fairly slick, but may not be quite on par with those of other recent racing sims. Lankhor has done a good job of depicting varying weather conditions, and the circuit helicopter flyovers are another nice touch.

This is a challenging game for newbies, but others may be frustrated by the lack of realism and limited setup options.
Julian Schoffel

A sort of arcade/simulation hybrid, Official Formula 1 Racing is probably best suited to racing newbies like myself.

Classification: G
Price: $89.95
From: Ozisoft (02) 9317 0000
System requirements: P90, 16Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.0), 1Mb SVGA graphics card (8Mb Direct3D-compatible 3D card highly recommended)

Graphics: ●●●●
Sound: ●●●● ◗
Gameplay: ●●● ◗
Overall value: ●●● ◗

Austin Powers: Operation trivia

GENRE QUIZ GAME

Do I make you horny, baby?

Trivia fans with a desire for more of the man with the worst teeth in cinema should check out this amusing, if slightly shallow, quiz game.

The game is inspired by the popular You Don't Know Jack game, and while the voice-overs are good, Mike Myers isn't the man behind the microphone. Colin Mahan provides the voice and he does fall out of character from time to time, and some of his lines are pretty lame. However, there are some classics like: 'You know, you are so good that I'd be restraining Mini Me from humping your leg if he were here right now' as Dr Evil. Austin's inventive euphemisms for the penis (like, ahem, 'bearded sausage') are also amusing, but the novelty does fade fairly rapidly.

Austin Powers: Operation Trivia — as you can see, this game is very cheeky indeed.

Gameplay generally consists of selecting from a number of multiple-choice answers to a light-hearted pop trivia question. The questions are animated by cartoony swirls of colour, bright letters, and lots of sixties designs. This works quite well, and it certainly looks a lot better than You Don't Know Jack.

There are also lots of questions focusing on the *Spy Who Shagged Me* and the sixties, as well as modern pop culture, although the ability to 'screw' your opponent from You Don't Know Jack is sadly missing. Even though some of the items have an American bias, you'll be surprised by how much you know.

As a party game, it's worth a look, but otherwise you might find it lacks staying power (something which would horrify Mr Powers!). Judged purely on its gameplay, there is little difference between this and You Don't Know Jack. Indeed, Jack is a little funnier, slicker and has more sub-games and features.
Steve Polak

List price: $69.95
Classification: G
Price: $69.95
From: Roadshow Interactive (02) 9952 8700
System requirements: P90, 16Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, hard disk space, Windows 95 or 98 (DirectX 6.0)

Graphics: ●●●
Sound: ●● ◗
Gameplay: ●●●
Overall value: ●●●

Dungeon Keeper 2 tips

● Have your creatures pray in a temple to accelerate mana recharge rates. You can also sacrifice creatures to get special gifts from the gods. To do this, pick the creatures up and drop them into the water surrounding the altar.

● If you need mana fast, drop a few imps into your dungeon heart.

● You can exploit a gameplay flaw by sandbagging right up to your enemy's dungeon or stronghold. This is only possible on water or lava maps; the trick is to build bridges and sell them off behind you. Leave solitary, disconnected pieces scattered around, so if enemy imps manage to capture the bridge piece adjacent to their territory, you can assault them by reconnecting the bridge and dropping your creatures back into enemy territory.

● Train your creatures up a few levels and send a rogue out into the map to explore using the Possession spell. Try to find the enemy dungeon heart as quickly as possible. When you have sufficient forces, cast the Call to Arms spell right next to it.

● To train your minions quickly, build a combat pit and drop in pairs of creatures. Keep healing them as they fight and they will rapidly attain Level 8 combat experience. This will cost a fair bit of mana, so try to focus on more powerful creatures. If one of them falls unconscious while fighting, they will be teleported to the side of the pit. In this case, make your imps carry the body back to a lair for healing before it dies.

● To convert enemies, drop them into the torture chamber, then heal them. Placing a dark mistress next to them will speed up the process.

● Portals can only attract a finite number of creatures, but there are three main ways of increasing your forces: skeletons, vampires and conversions. Converting high-level enemy troops is the best option, as they retain their existing skill levels, whereas skeletons and vampires always start out at Level 1.

● Try to summon the Horned Reaper near large groups of enemy creatures, preferably when fighting on claimed territory. Your imps can then pick up the wounded and dead for interrogation, conversion or skeleton/vampire creation.

● When you need to build traps or doors fast, lock your trolls and bile demons in the workshop.

● On one of the later levels in the single-player campaign, you need to capture the king's sons (do not kill them) before they escape through hero gates. First explore the map and find the 'Reveal Map' magical item: you need to be able to see the whole map to win this level. Now build bridges towards the enemy fortifications; you will notice that some of the patrolling forces pass over a bridge. Capture this bridge and sell it to trap one of the princes on the island. Lure another prince onto a bridge you've built (using an imp), and sell parts of it to trap him on a disconnected piece. Once you've done this, you can go after the final prince in the conventional way, without worrying about the other two escaping. Make sure you heal the princes before you torture them, otherwise they'll die before the conversion process is complete.

● The final level of the single-player campaign is difficult. To win, you have to defeat the stone knights using the Horned Reaper. Try to claim all the territory right up to where the knights are, then summon Horny on the tile outside.

Once you feel you have sufficient forces, find your enemy's dungeon heart and cast the 'Call to Arms' spell right next to it. Now sit back and watch the fun . . .

PC PLAYER-CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME

Win one of six game packs

This month, PC Player readers have the chance to win one of six Civilization II: Test of Time game packs, containing a copy of the game plus a mousemat. Each pack is valued at $100.

To enter, just answer the following questions:

1 What are the two new variations on the original game in Test of Time?

2 What are the maps in the sci-fi game?

Hint: The answers to these questions can be found in this month's PC Player.

Entries can be e-mailed to us at:
pcuser@acp.com.au
sent to:
Australian PC User
Civilization: Test of Time
Competition
GPO Box 4088,
Sydney NSW 1028
or faxed through to:
(02) 9267 4909

HASBRO Interactive

MICROPROSE

Please ensure that all entries are clearly marked 'Civilization: Test of Time Competition' and include your name, postal address and daytime telephone number. The first six correct entries to be drawn on December 1 will each receive a prize pack.

On the CD

Outlook lookout

***Link Harris** reviews books that help broaden your Outlook 98 horizons.*

All the books reviewed on this page are based on a beta version of Outlook 98. This means they suffer from varying degrees of 'beta blindness', with actual Outlook 98 features misrepresented, qualified with 'under development' or a similar slimy phrase — or ignored altogether.

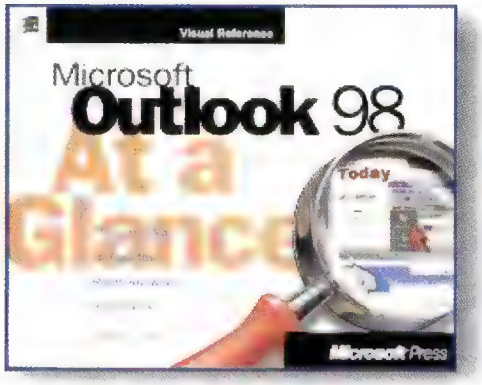
A step above the rest, *Mastering Microsoft Outlook 98* is a refreshing treasure from the disappointing lucky dip of recent offerings in this Sybex series. The book magically balances being an authoritative reference and an accessible tutorial offering both quick-start and in-depth instruction, and includes a full copy of Outlook 98 on CD-ROM. The advice for overcoming Outlook 98's quirky behaviour is less detailed than that in Outlook Annoyances, which serves up a mix of unique and useful advice on Outlook 98 and obsolete workarounds for Outlook 97.

Although not as complete as *Mastering Microsoft Outlook 98*, *Outlook 98 Made Easy* targets the same audience and uses screenshots more effectively. Enhanced by snappy production, Using Microsoft Outlook 98 is an attractive alternative to the two books previously mentioned if you're after a detailed reference minus advanced topics such as VBScript and Outlook Object Model.

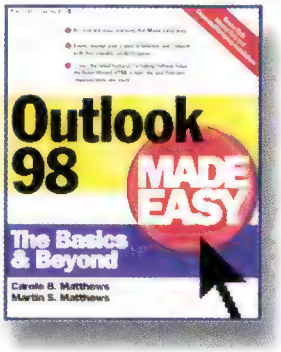
However, for screenshots and steps that tell a beginner how without wasting words on the why, *Microsoft Outlook At a Glance* is a winner — apart from the price. Experienced PC users would probably prefer to kick-start from the visual table of contents in Microsoft Outlook 98 Field Guide, which is more credible that either *10 Minute Guide to Microsoft Outlook 98* or the identical, but for the cover (and price), *Sam's Teach Yourself Outlook 98 in 10 Minutes*.

Tutorial in style, rather than task-oriented like the four books already mentioned, *Sam's Teach Yourself Outlook 98 in 24 Hours* is wordy and repetitious, and not up to the usual standard of this series.

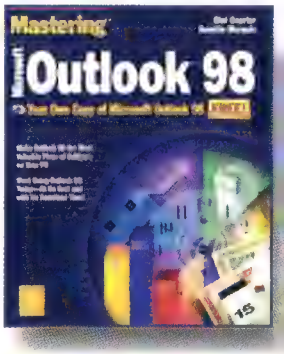
Quick Course in Microsoft Outlook 98 is another disappointing tutorial. ❑



Microsoft Outlook At a Glance has a visual focus, with each step for a task identified by the number on the adjacent screenshot.



Outlook 98 Made Easy is written around the Internet Only installation of Outlook 98, with differences noted for the Corporate/Workgroup option.



Mastering Microsoft Outlook 98 flags new features to help upgraders from Outlook 97, and contains the only credible coverage of WinFax.

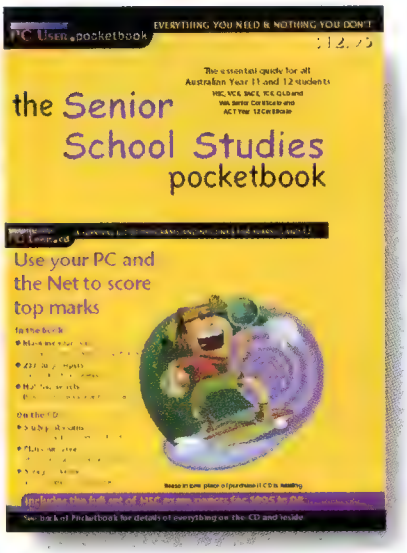
THE BEST BOOKS

Title	From	Price	Level	Readability	Overall value
Mastering Microsoft Outlook 98	Pearson Education Australia (02) 9454 2200	$79.95	Beg/Adv	●●●●	●●●●●
Outlook Annoyances	Woodslane (02) 9970 5111	$54.95	Int/Adv	●●●	●●●
Outlook 98 Made Easy	McGraw-Hill (02) 9417 4288	$44.95	Beg/Adv	●●●●	●●●●●
Using Microsoft Outlook 98	Pearson Education Australia (02) 9454 2200	$59.95	Beg/Int	●●●●●	●●●●
Microsoft Outlook At a Glance	Woodslane (02) 9970 5111	$39.95	Beg	●●●●●	●●●●
Microsoft Outlook 98 Field Guide	Woodslane (02) 9970 5111	$29.95	Beg/Int	●●●●	●●●●
10 Minute Guide to Microsoft Outlook 98	Pearson Education Australia (02) 9454 2200	$21.95	Beg	●●●	●●●
Sams Teach Yourself Outlook 98 in 10 Minutes	Pearson Education Australia (02) 9454 2200	$24.95	Beg	●●●	●●●
Sams Teach Yourself Outlook 98 in 24 Hours	Pearson Education Australia (02) 9454 2200	$39.95	Beg/Int	●●●	●●●
Quick Course in Microsoft Outlook 98	Woodslane (02) 9970 5111	$34.95	Beg	●●	●●

Cover disc includes past exam papers, a guide to Australian tertiary institutions, study tools and sanity-saving games.

Don't panic!

You can still make the grade



Use your PC and the Net to score better marks

— an essential guide for all Australian Year 11 and 12 students

Out now!

Published by

AUSTRALIAN PC USER

Advanced Windows 98 tools

***Jan Wikström** brings you the last part of our series on the Windows 98 toolbox.*

Believe it or not, I'm still digging into the toolbox of Windows 98; we're rounding off with networking and scripting tools.

Network monitor service

This comprises one protocol driver running on the network manager's machine and an agent program on each supervised machine. The agents gather network packet statistics and the protocol driver lets you view them on the system monitor. This service is based on NetBIOS, so if your network runs IPX/SPX you must enable NetBIOS support for IPX/SPX.

Password list editor

This is a specialised tool for editing password list files. For security reasons, it doesn't show the passwords stored in the file, but it does allow the owner of the list to delete stored passwords, provided that the owner has logged on as such. It is used to list computer sharing, network access and Internet site access passwords, so it can be a handy tool for eliminating passwords that are no longer needed.

Remote registry service

If the software is running on all the right machines, this enables an administrator to edit the registry files remotely. It does let you make really serious mistakes, but a competent network administrator should be able to correct them.

RPC print provider

This can install Windows 98 interface components on a

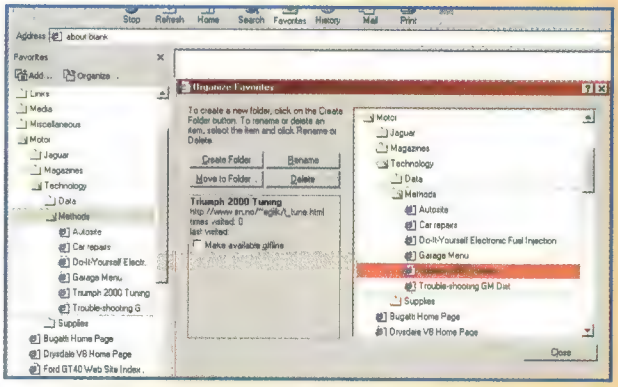
GETTING YOUR FAVOURITES IN A ROW

The URL listing 'Favorites' in Internet Explorer (and, for that matter, the regular Explorer and the Start menu) can easily become unwieldy, as some readers have complained. You can keep it under control by periodically cutting out all the URLs you don't use any more, but even so, there's such a lot of useful stuff on the Internet that pruning won't get you very far.

It's far better to institute a systematic way of organising the URLs. I've found it useful to organise them by category and subject. In the illustration on this page, you can see that one category is Motor, with a subcategory Technology and the subject Methods, which is where I store my links to sites that tell me how to do various motor repair jobs.

It's really the same as organising document files on your hard disk, which shows particularly in the view here; it looks less obvious in the drop-down menu view. However, the Organise Favorites window is the same in both cases. This window has buttons for all the expected functions, but still accepts drag-and-drop operations, which of course speeds up big reorganisations.

You'll notice a box, 'Make available offline', in this window. This serves roughly the same purpose as the old Subscribe function of IE4; it downloads a specified part of a site so you can read it later without running up online charges. If you check this box, a Properties button appears. If you click that button, you can specify how many levels deep your copy of the site will be and when it will be updated.



There is practically no limit to the number of URLs that can be handled in Favorites if they are logically organised in folders.

If the superfluous Favorites item irritates you, popping out every time you drag the cursor across, it can be removed with the aid of TweakUI.

JUST THE FAX, MA'AM

Remember when faxes were the latest and greatest? Microsoft got on the bandwagon and incorporated fax into Windows for Workgroups and Windows 95 under the name Microsoft at Work Fax. Then it was dropped in Windows 98 when a bigger, shinier bandwagon came past — the Internet. Microsoft had fixed up its messaging to handle e-mail, but it was getting pretty creaky, so in Windows 98 it was replaced with Outlook (Express or full version).

That's why MSAWF was dropped — it needs MS Messaging to work. Fortunately, Microsoft has opened the door to those of us that still want a basic fax option — Windows Messaging and Microsoft Fax are available on the Windows 98 installation CD. The folder \Tools\Oldwin 95\Message\Intl contains the two files Wms.exe and Awfax.exe.

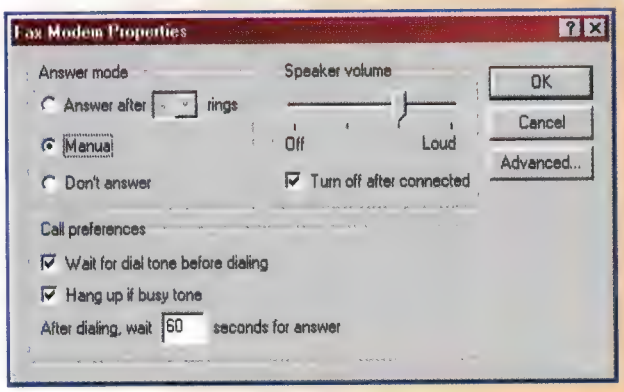
To make space for the program, run Wms.exe by double-clicking on the file. This installs the Windows Messaging system Version 4.0 on your machine and creates the necessary icons. Next, run Awfax.exe, which installs the fax program and all its accessories, such as a range of cover pages and a cover page editor.

Sending

Open Windows Messaging and select Compose, New Fax, then step through the wizard to set the recipient, choose cover page, type a message and attach one or more files.

MS Office programs have a 'File, Send' menu item, which will crank up the same wizard and send a fax unless you have Outlook Express 5 installed. In that case, it will start Outlook Express and offer to send the document as an e-mail attachment. I don't know about you, but on my machine, this doesn't really work because the 'send message' window that opens has no link to the address book. Is this because I have upgraded to Windows 98 SE since the fax was installed, or because I have tinkered too much? I don't know, but I'd appreciate hearing from MSAWF users who have tried this.

When you use the Compose, New Fax option, you'll find that the address book is not the same as your Outlook address book. You can export your Outlook address book and import it into the Windows Messaging one.



The Fax Modem Properties dialog box has the usual settings in addition to the fax receiving ones. A number of specialised functions hide behind the Advanced buttons, including the option to make use of a Class 2 modem if one is present — a new option, quietly sneaked in.

Receiving

This is very simple: once you know that a fax is expected, all you need to do is open Windows Messaging. A little fax icon appears in your system tray and the modem is initialised to receive a fax.

What happens next depends on the options you have selected. If you click on the little fax icon, it will open a display that tells you what is going on at the moment; it has an Options menu, which includes a Modem Properties option. If you select that, you can set the usual modem parameters and also the answer mode from a choice of Don't Answer, Manual and 'Answer after (n) rings'.

The automatic answer option is a little tricky if you have a single line: you don't want a human caller to get a loud whistle instead of your own dulcet voice. To prevent that, you need to set the number of rings high enough for you to be able to get to the phone in time. And if, as is so often the case, the phone is next to the computer anyway, what's the point? You might as well leave the thing on the manual setting.

To read a received fax, use Windows Messaging and act as if you were receiving an e-mail.

The Windows at Work Fax is simple and easy to handle, but is short on bells and whistles, as you might expect from a freebie. If you want a full-featured, industrial-strength fax program, you'll need to get a third-party product.

Windows NT network server to enable a workstation to collect printer account and status information from the print server.

SNMP agent

Installing this item on a network workstation makes its traffic information available to an SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol) Version 1 console on the network.

Scripting tools

Plug-in commands for the Windows Scripting Host and a help file for the Host and commands. The host is an Active-X engine allowing you to run scripts without an HTML interpreter.

Timethis This command allows a script to time a process.

Waitfor Causes a script to wait for a signal to be received over the network

Winset Sets and resets Windows 98 environment variables.

Windows Scripting Host Administrator's Guide This Help file is a little sketchy, but it's intended for experienced people such as system administrators. Also, there are links to more in-depth information on the Web. ❑

Partition your hard disk in Windows NT

***Link Harris** explains how to use PartitionMagic 4.01 to repartition your hard disk.*

The name could be considered pretentious, but PartitionMagic delivers when you want to reorganise your hard disk. And it really does seem like magic compared with Microsoft's arduous alternative: back-up data, apply Fdisk and Format, reinstall operating systems and applications and restore data. Nevertheless, PartitionMagic's deceptively simple interface cloaks some complex on-disk manoeuvres, so it's not surprising that you need a few tricks of your own to make it operate smoothly.

PartitionMagic helps you overcome the 4Gb maximum imposed by NT4 Setup for an NTFS drive. It also lets you install NT4 to dual boot with Windows 98 when the latter is installed on a disk formatted with FAT32. In this situation, you get PartitionMagic to grab some unused space from the FAT32 partition and create a primary NTFS partition, on which you install NT4. Then you use BootMagic, a boot manager included on the PartitionMagic CD-ROM, to manage the dual boot.

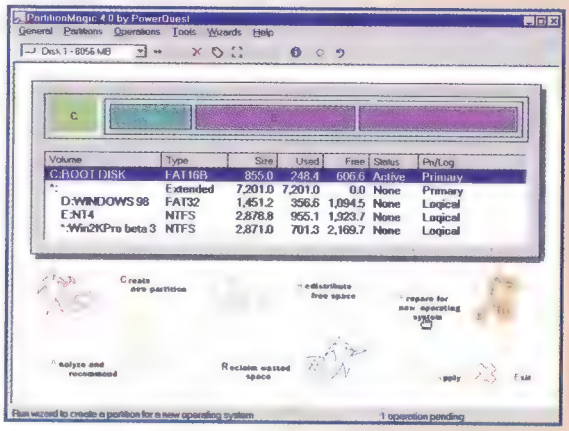


Figure 1: The 32-bit versions of PartitionMagic include a collection of wizards to walk you through the most popular procedures.

What is PartitionMagic?

It's a utility that lets you resize or move an existing partition or create a new one without clobbering the files on your hard disk (see Figure 1). You can close PartitionMagic after you've made the changes and it doesn't have to run in the background to maintain them. You can even uninstall the software when you're satisfied with the repartitioning results.

PartitionMagic will manipulate and format partitions in FAT16, FAT16X, FAT32, FAT32X, ExtendedX, NTFS, HPFS, Linux Ext2 and Linux Swap, and convert FAT16 to FAT32, FAT16 TO HPFS, FAT16 TO NTFS and FAT32 to FAT16 (a process unavailable from any Microsoft operating system). You can install three different native versions from the PartitionMagic 4.0 CD-ROM: Windows 3.1x, 95/98 and NT4 Workstation. A different PowerQuest product, ServerMagic, now caters for NT4 Server.

PartitionMagic will handle NTFS partitions created by Windows 2000, but won't run reliably on it. As with NT 3.51, OS/2 Linux or BeOS, you can manage partitions either from one of the native versions of PartitionMagic or the DOS version on the Rescue Diskette. See this month's DOS/Windows column for more details on the PartitionMagic software suite.

What it won't do

PartitionMagic isn't all-powerful. Its list of no-can-dos includes:

1. Merge two non-empty partitions (ones that contain files) into a single partition that holds the files from both.
2. Partition a Zip or removable SCSI drive.
3. Recognise or otherwise operate on a network drive, even a mapped network drive.
4. Convert an NTFS file system to FAT.

On a multiboot system, DriveMapper can't reliably change the drive letters associated with an application installed on more than one operating system if there are folders shared by each installation. In this case, the best approach is to back up your data, uninstall the application in each operating system, work the partition magic, and reinstall the application in each operating system.

Patch before using

Although it's tempting to test-drive your fresh installation of PartitionMagic 4.0, don't! NT4 users should reboot to avoid possible colour palette problems. Apart from that, the first step after installing any flavour of PartitionMagic is to apply the appropriate Version 4.01 patch, available from www.powerquest.com/updates/index.html.

Note that PowerQuest is quirky about the names of its patch archives. For instance, the NT4 archive PMnt400-401.zip is called PM401nt.zip on another page of its Web site. You'll find the same peculiar pairing for most of the

PowerQuest patches, so don't be misled into thinking you need both copies.

Here are a few tricks to smooth your passage through the patching in NT4. Run En401nt.exe in the Partition Magic folder, usually C:\Program Files\PowerQuest\Partition Magic4. In the Locate Existing PartitionMagic Folder window, ignore the 'file' entry in the File name field and click Open.

Disregard the title bar that says PartitionMagic(R) v4.01 Update for Windows(R) 95/98. However, note carefully what Setup finds for the location of 'Win NT System32 Directory' — usually C:\Winnt\System32 — and 'Win NT System32\ Drivers Directory' — usually C:\Winnt\System32\Drivers. If Setup nominates something silly, keep clicking No until it finds the correct location.

The En401nt.exe patch also updates most of the other utilities in the PartitionMagic suite. However, Create Rescue Diskette needs to be patched separately with En401res.exe. Ignore the folder specified in the archive's readme.txt file and run this patch from C:\Program Files\PowerQuest\Partition Magic4\Rescueme. The updated program creates a Rescue floppy containing PartitionMagic v4.01.65 (click Help, About). You can delete both patch files after they've done their updating.

Mend BootMagic

Before installing BootMagic, it's a good idea to create a DOS boot floppy that includes fdisk.exe. That's because BootMagic 1.0 has a nasty habit of invoking the fatal Error 251 (Error reading partition table) which brands your hard disk as an unbootable source. You can temporarily fix this by booting with the DOS floppy and running fdisk /mbr, which restores your bootable hard disk and immobilises BootMagic.

The permanent solution is to patch BootMagic to Version 1.01, preferably before the first time you run the program. If you don't have the patch, you should disable BootMagic 1.0 before you reboot. Start the BootMagic Configuration program and click to uncheck BootMagic Enabled in the lower left-hand corner of the opening screen (in the DOS version, do this when Setup displays the BootMagic Configuration window). You should also make a BootMagic Rescue Diskette, a bootable DOS floppy that lets you configure — or disable — BootMagic.

Tricks with NT4

Backup boot.ini As it shuffles partitions, PartitionMagic can change the contents of the file boot.ini. In particular, it edits the number identifying the partition that holds NT4's system files (Figure 2), and this can change several times before your PC reboots.

If the NT4 entry in boot.ini points to the wrong partition, which is certain to happen if PartitionMagic's Boot-Time procedure packs it in (see below), NT4 won't start. Instead you'll get a blue screen with the error message: 'Missing or corrupt ~winntroot&\system32\ntoskrnl.exe, please reinstall'. That message is almost always caused by a wonky (or missing) boot.ini.

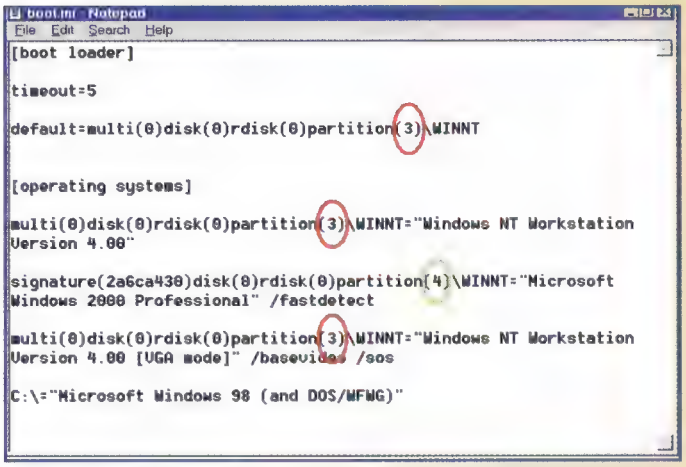


Figure 2: The partition numbers for NT4 (partition 3, circled in red three times) in boot.ini must correspond to the partition where NT4 is installed (E: in Figure 1). If you're multibooting to other installations of NT4 or Windows 2000 (partition 4, circled in green) these also must tally (unlabelled, far right in Figure 1).

Before the first time you run PartitionMagic, whether from NT4 or another operating system (including the PartitionMagic Rescue Diskette), make a backup of boot.ini, which lives in the root folder of your boot drive, usually C:\. Although you can keep a renamed copy on your hard disk, it's a smart move to add boot.ini to your DOS boot floppy.

The DOS boot floppy should also include the DOS programs edit.com and qbasic.exe, in case you have to edit boot.ini to make NT4 bootable. Even if PartitionMagic gets the partition right in boot.ini for the default operating system, it will overlook entries for other versions of NT or Windows 2000 (partition 4, Figure 2), rendering these unbootable until you correct their partition numbers.

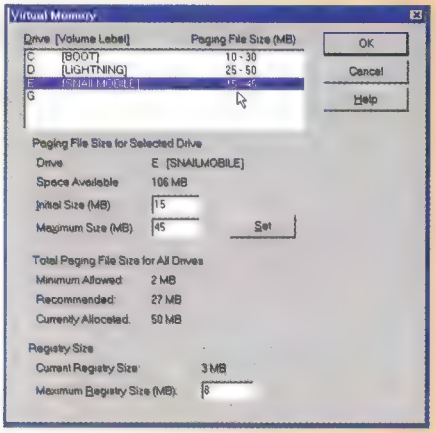
Update ERD You can correct most other NT4-specific PartitionMagic problems if you have an up-to-date Emergency Repair Disk (ERD), which you can create by running rdisk /s.

Use Disk Administrator NT4 is pretty cluey about assigning drive letters as partitions get created or moved. However, running PartitionMagic in Windows 95/98 can undo changes to drive letters made in NT4, so keep an eye out for this if you're dual booting. If a critical drive letter does get changed, you can swap it back using NT4's Disk Administrator (Start, Programs, Administrative Tools (Common)). This is more powerful than the similar feature in the NT4 flavour of PartitionMagic, which won't change the letter for a FAT32 drive.

INSIDER TIP:SCATTEREDSWAPFILE

PartitionMagic can't lock a drive where NT4 files are open, so it forces a reboot to run in Boot-Time mode. This always happens when you make changes to the boot partition and, if it's different, the one where NT4 is installed. However, other drives will be unlockable if they hold part of NT4's swapfile (called the paging file).

You can suss out the swapfile situation from Start, Settings, Control Panel, System, Performance tab. Click Change in the Virtual Memory box and note which drives have an entry for Paging File Size (above cursor). To clear the swapfile from a drive, select the drive, delete the entries in the initial Size and maximum Size fields and click Set. Then click OK. The changes don't take effect until you reboot.



Find which drives have swapfile entries and clear them in the Virtual Memory box, under Control Panel, System, Performance.

PC USER PRODUCTIVITY DISC

PartitionMagic 4.0: patch to Version 4.01 (PMnt400-401.zip for NT4, PMwin400-401.zip for Windows 95/98, PMdos400-401.zip for DOS/Windows 3.1x); Rescue Diskette utility patch to Version 4.01 (PM401res.zip for Windows 95/98/NT4).

BootMagic 1.0: patch to Version 1.01 (Bm101win.zip for Windows 95/98/NT4, Bm101dos.zip for DOS/Windows 3.1x).

PartitionMagic 4.0 demos: (PM4NT.exe for NT4, PM4WIN9X.exe for Windows 95/98, PM4DOS.zip for DOS/Windows 3.1x); User Guides (PM4USERG.zip); All documentation (PM4MAN.zip).

Since you can't have both PartitionMagic and Disk Administrator open at the same time, the main advantage of changing drives from PartitionMagic is that you don't have to quit the program and start Disk Administrator. Changing drive letters from either program is the way to go in NT4. Avoid using the occasionally iffy DriveMapper, which is intended for other operating systems that don't give you control over drive letters.

Avoid Boot-Time mode NT4 is fairly possessive about letting software have exclusive use of files on a drive (called locking the drive), which PartitionMagic needs to do when it rearranges partitions. If PartitionMagic can't lock a drive, it remembers what you've asked it to do and reboots to run its Boot-Time mode, an automatic DOS (character) incarnation, before NT4 restarts. This process often falls over because DOS matches drive letters to partitions differently from the way NT4 does. It's also painfully slow. If what you want PartitionMagic to do forces rebooting, consider running PartitionMagic in DOS GUI mode from the Rescue Diskette instead.

Know your NTFS The maximum size NTFS partition NT4 Setup will create is 4Gb. Setup reboots three times during the NT4 install, and it's tempting to hijack the third boot with a PartitionMagic rescue Diskette and enlarge the partition at this stage. Don't! When you revert to Setup's third boot, it will spit out a register dump and die.

Be patient instead and use PartitionMagic — after NT4 has been fully installed — to increase the size of the NTFS partition. However, PowerQuest acknowledges that drive letters are likely to disappear when PartitionMagic resizes a partition over the 4Gb boundary, and recommends you use Disk Administrator to reassign the letters.

Although NT4 with Service Pack 4 or better can access drives larger than 7.875Gb (8064Mb), the boot drive cannot be larger (see *PC User* June, page 100, for more details). If you accidentally oversize the boot drive, you can salvage the situation by booting with the PartitionMagic Rescue Diskette and shrinking it to less than 7.875Gb.

If you want to install NT4 on an NTFS drive larger than 7.875Gb, first have Setup create a small (say, 100Mb) FAT partition for the boot drive (which must be on your first hard disk, if your PC has more than one installed). Then install NT4 on a second partition, which PartitionMagic can stretch to the rest of the hard disk. Having a FAT boot drive gives you another advantage. It lets you use NT4's Boot Options Menu to dual boot with Windows 98 — which can be installed either before or after NT4 — on a third drive formatted with FAT 32.

Although you can format with NTFS from any flavour of PartitionMagic, including the Rescue Diskette, you can only convert FAT to NTFS if you're running PartitionMagic in NT4. That's because PartitionMagic uses Disk Administrator's Convert routine for NTFS. As with changing a drive letter, it's more reliable to use Disk Administrator to convert a drive from FAT to NTFS.

Price: $129 (includes BootMagic 1.0) for Windows 95/98, NT4 and DOS/Windows 3.1x
From: Marketing Results
Phone: (02) 9899 5888
Web: www.marketingresults.com.au

Partitioning in Windows 3.1

PartitionMagic's 16-bit version needs a helping hand, as ***Link Harris*** *explains.*

PartitionMagic looks after your data while rearranging the space on your hard disk. Applications include increasing the free space on a drive by transferring space from another drive and copying the contents of one or more partitions to a different hard disk. It's a replacement for Fdisk and Format — and heaps of hard yakka.

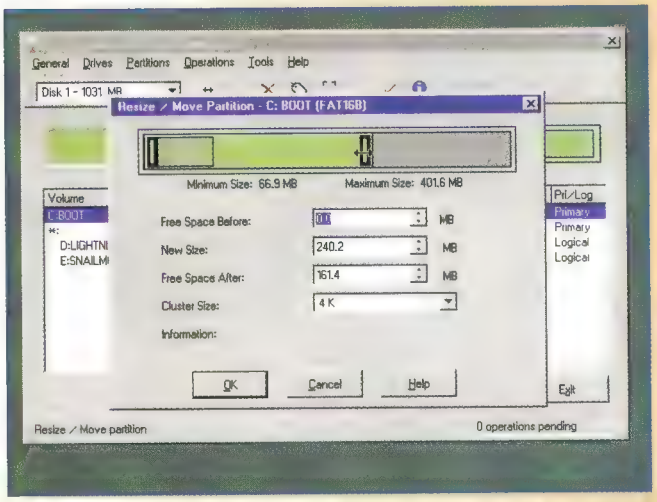


Figure 1: Even the DOS version of PartitionMagic features a friendly graphical interface.

PartitionMagic's offsiders

Even though this is a DOS application (Figure 1), the suite of programs has to be installed in Windows. MagicMover, the only Windows program, coordinates moving the files to a different drive. If a drive letter changes, DriveMapper seeks all references to the original letter and changes them. PartInfo extracts information about your hard disk to help PowerQuest technical support.

PQBoot lets you specify which partition your PC should boot from. If you frequently boot to different operating systems, you should go with BootMagic, also included on the PartitionMagic CD-ROM, which installs from its own Setup program.

Patch precautions

DriveMapper Applying En401dos.exe deletes drvmapdt.exe and drvmapdt.pif from C:\pqmagic4\utility\dos, but doesn't replace these with the ones for the DriveMapper 2.0 update. The original is better than none, and you can preserve it by moving or renaming the files before patching, and then restoring them.

Rescue Diskette For generating PartitionMagic 4.01 Rescue and Help Diskettes, En401res.exe produces a new Setup.exe which will run from Windows 3.1x. However, the patch requires Windows 95/98 or NT4. If you don't have access to these, you can manually upgrade the PartitionMagic 4.0 Rescue and Help Diskettes after applying En401dos.exe to your Windows installation by copying C:\pqmagic4\dos\pqmagic.ovl to A:\ for the Rescue Diskette and copying C:\pqmagic4\dos\pmhelp.dat to A:\, and the files partinfo.exe, pqboot.exe and ptedit.exe from C:\pqmagic4\utility\dos\ to A:\ for the Help Diskette.

Tips and traps

Mouse The Windows mouse driver won't work with any of the PartitionMagic DOS utilities from Windows, so you'll need to load mouse.com from your autoexec.bat file. If you've already done that, you might find that the version PartitionMagic Setup copies to your hard disk requires less RAM. To use this, make a backup of your autoexec.bat file and open the original in a text editor. Add the line LH C:\PQMAGIC4\DOS\MOUSE.COM and put REM at the beginning of the original MOUSE.COM line, if there is one.

Rescue Diskette The DOS version doesn't have a Create Rescue Diskette option. You can make the Rescue and Help floppies by running makedisk.bat from the PartitionMagic CD-ROM. Move to the directory D:\os2inst (replace D: with the drive letter for your CD-ROM), and type makedisk A: (replace A: with the drive letter for your floppy drive). You can do this from File Manager (File, Run) or the native DOS prompt.

PartInfo You can launch PartInfo from its Windows icon, but the DOS window closes before you can see the results. It's best to run it either directly from a DOS window or from the native DOS prompt. From C:\pqmagic4\utility\dos, typing 'partinfo | more' displays the output one screen at a time, 'partinfo & prn' sends the results directly to your printer, and 'partinfo & partinfo.txt' puts results into the file partinfo.txt.

Swapfile If the Windows swapfile gets moved when PartitionMagic rearranges the drive where Windows is installed (usually C:\), this could produce a swapfile error message or prevent Windows from starting. If it won't start, boot to the DOS prompt and delete C:\386spart.par and C:\windows\spart.par. If Windows says the swapfile is corrupt, delete and recreate it (Control Panel, Enhanced, Virtual Memory, Change).

Dead DOS Some versions of DOS won't install properly or will hang at bootup if the cluster size is smaller than 2Kb, which will happen when PartitionMagic creates or resizes a FAT partition smaller than 64Mb. To make it DOS-friendly, select it and click Operations, Advanced, Resize Clusters, drop down the 'New cluster size' list and select 2K. ❑

Back to basics with Word

Are there any glaring gaps in your knowledge of Word? ***Helen Bradley*** *makes sure they're filled.*

It's easy to delve so deep into your software that you overlook its basic tools and options, but these can save you time. This month, take a back-to-basics look at your word processing skills and see how many you can apply to your work. We've used Word 97/2000 for this column, but you can apply most of these skills to other software.

Views

Word has a number of different choices for viewing your document, called, not surprisingly, 'views'. These are available from the view menu. Normal view is a plain view of your document. It's fast and many people prefer working in it. If you set it up to display one, you can have a Style area display down the left-hand side of the window showing the styles being used in the document. To do this, switch to Normal view (View, Normal) and select Tools, Options, View tab, set the Style Area Width to, say 2.5cm (1 inch) and click OK.

Page Layout view shows you the margins of each page and header and footer text, and using it makes it easier to see how your document will look when printed. Use Page Layout view if you're creating a document like an ad or a flyer where the location of each element is important — you'll be able to control it better in this view. Online Layout View shows the document in a document map format for easier work online, which lets you see where you are in your document and move around more easily. In the Online view, the text is larger and scrolls differently to the way it will in the final document (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Three of the views of your document you can access in Word. Each gives you a different way to work with your document.

Toolbars

The toolbars that appear at the top of your screen are fully customisable and you can choose whether or not you want them to appear. To see the range of toolbars, select View, Toolbars. The most common toolbars to display are the Standard and Formatting toolbars. These contain most of the buttons you'll need for common tasks. A toolbar is displayed if it has a tick next to its name. If it isn't displayed, select its name.

You can remove an unwanted button from a visible toolbar if you hold the Alt key while you drag it off the toolbar and drop it into the editing area. You can also position a toolbar on any side of the viewing window or floating over the editing area. To move a toolbar, grab the double bars at its left or topmost point or its title bar (depending on where it is currently located) with your left mouse button and drag it into a new position. You'll see an outline of the shape it will be and where it will appear so you can position it more accurately (see Figure 2).

Paragraph markers

Perhaps one of the most confusing aspects of Word, particularly if you come to it from WordPerfect, is its formatting behaviour. It stores all the formatting characteristics of a paragraph in the paragraph marker that appears at the end of the paragraph. This is additionally confusing because the paragraph marker is usually invisible onscreen, which means you can do all sorts of things with it without realising you're doing them.

To see the paragraph markers in your document, select

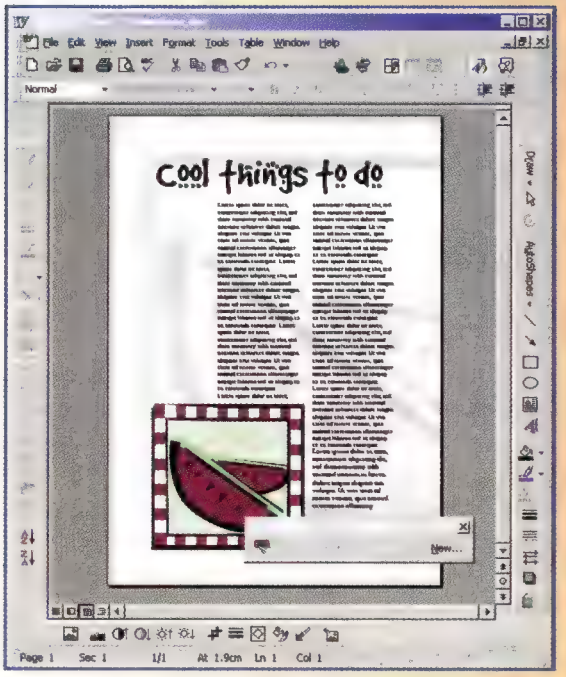


Figure 2: There are toolbars anchored all around this editing area and one floating over the top of it.

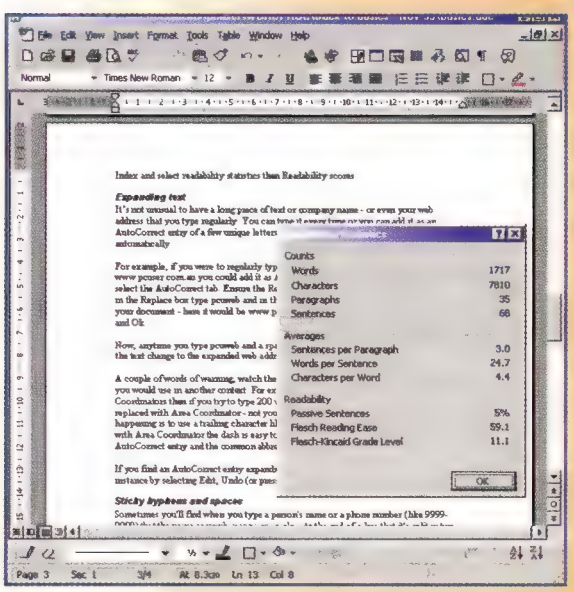


Figure 3: The grammar checker can be set to give you readability statistics for your document.

Ctrl+* or select the Show/Hide¶ button on the Standard toolbar. Paragraph markers (¶) appear at the end of every paragraph. Whenever you're moving or copying a paragraph and you want to take its formatting with it, remember to take the paragraph marker too, by including the paragraph marker when you highlight the paragraph. On the other hand, if you highlight the text in a paragraph and not the paragraph marker at the end of it, you'll only copy the text and not any of its paragraph formats.

If a paragraph has formatting that you want to copy — for example, line spacing, tab settings and so on — you can copy the formatting alone (no text) by copying the paragraph marker. When you replace the paragraph marker of another paragraph with the one you've copied, the formatting will change automatically.

Inline images

Thankfully, the new Word 2000 offers better image handling than Word 97 does. In Word 97 it's all too easy to end up with an image in a document that simply won't move around freely. This is an inline image, which you can tell because when you select it, it has a thin black border around it. If you drag it with the mouse, it tends to drop into the middle of a paragraph and text doesn't wrap around it nicely. In fact, if you try to alter the text wrapping options for the image, you'll see they are greyed out.

Change an inline image to a free-floating one by selecting it, right-clicking, and selecting Format Picture (or Format Object). Select the Picture tab, enable the 'Float over text' checkbox and click OK. Now when the image is selected you'll see only the sizing handles and it can be moved and placed anywhere in the document. You can also use the wrapping options to select how text forms around the image.

Spelling, grammar and thesaurus

You can opt to have your text spell-checked as you type or on command. To alter this, select Tools, Options, Spelling & Grammar and enable or disable the 'Check spelling as you type' box. If you have this disabled, you can spellcheck your document manually any time if you select the Spelling and Grammar button on the Standard toolbar or press F7.

Word's Thesaurus is hidden in the Language menu (select Tools/Language/Thesaurus or press Shift+F7). Select a word to look up and then the Thesaurus. Once you're in it, you can move around and find synonyms for your word. If you select the dropdown list in the Looked Up area, you can return to any previous word you've looked up in the current session with the Thesaurus.

Grammar checking will help you write better constructed sentences. Select Tools, Options, Spelling and Grammar, and select the 'Check grammar with spelling' and 'Show readability statistics' boxes from the Grammar area. Now, whenever you check the spelling you'll also check the grammar in your document and when you're done, you'll see the Readability statistics (see Figure 3).

Expanding text

If you have a long piece of text that you type regularly, you can add it as an AutoCorrect entry using a few unique letters which Word will expand automatically. For example, if you

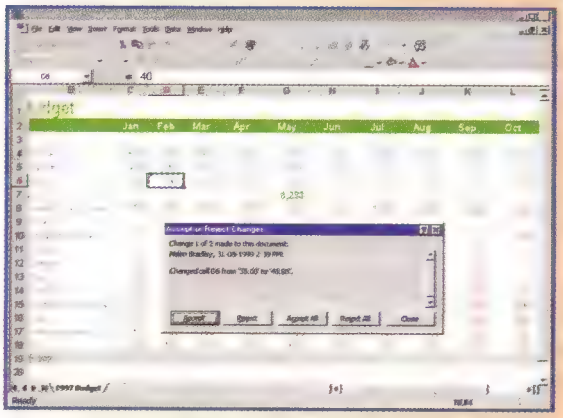


Figure 4: When you track changes, you have the ability to 'roll back' changes made to a workbook using the Accept and Reject Changes option.

the original value. You can then choose a value from the list to accept into that cell.

Disabling tracking

To turn off the function so that the change history is no longer tracked, select Tools, Share Workbook and choose the Editing tab. Disable the 'Allow changes by more than one user at the same time' box, then choose the Advanced tab. Select the 'Don't keep change history' option and click OK. You'll be warned that the history will be erased and will no longer be able to be viewed; select OK to change the option and erase the change history. Save and close your file. Open it again and the history will have been removed.

While you're tracking your changes, you'll find that some standard Excel functions have been disabled. You won't, for example, be able to delete a sheet, merge cells or apply some formatting options. If you find you can't do something that you want to do, you'll need to disable tracking and lose your change history, so you might want to consider printing a copy of your change history before you do it so that you have a record. You can do this by displaying the History sheet and selecting Print.

Other programs

Lotus 1-2-3 doesn't have a tracking function like Excel but it does have TeamConsolidate, which allows you to distribute workbook sheets in a Notes database to other users so they can enter data into them. You can then consolidate these into the original workbook. Storing the workbook in a Notes database can help you track changes over time.

In Quattro Pro, you can get a rudimentary tracking solution by using the Versions option to store different versions of a worksheet separately. It allows you to save the changes you've made to your file, and each version will be archived to its own folder. You can retrieve any archived file later. ❑

Add holiday greetings to your site

***Helen Bradley** shows you how to jazz up your site for special days.*

To remain interesting to your visitors, your Web site needs to stay fresh. It's all too easy to have good intentions about keeping the content updated and fail through lack of time to do it. This month you'll see a solution to the problem — it's a simple JavaScript page on which the text and the image change depending on the date (see Figure 1).

The sample page has been designed to change according to certain holidays, but you can adapt it so it changes every month, season, week — whatever! It's up to you and it's easy to do.

Creating the page

To create the sample page, type the HTML from Source Box into an HTML editor or a text editor such as Windows Write. Type the source exactly as shown and pay particular attention to the capitalisation of the JavaScript code; otherwise you run the risk of encountering errors. Save the file as holiday.htm.

Now you'll need images to go with the holidays, so find suitable images and name them: welcome.gif, newyear.gif, aust.gif, heart.gif, easter.gif, christmas.gif, boxing.gif and sea-

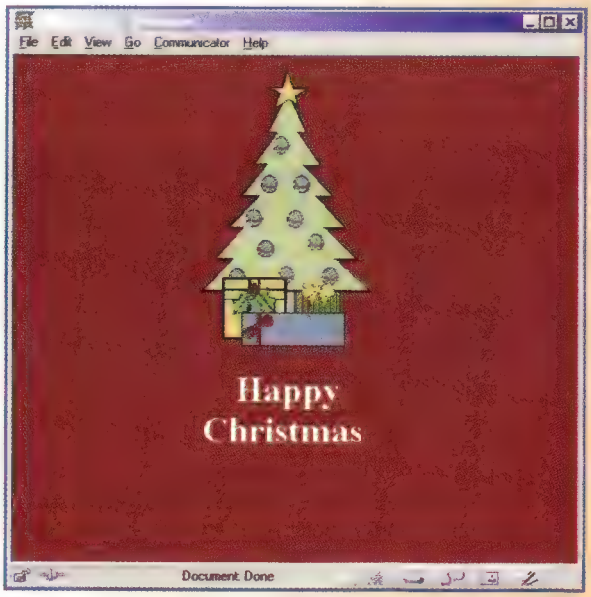


Figure 1: This month's project is a simple JavaScript page displaying content which changes according to the time of the year.

son.gif. Welcome.gif is the default image — it appears whenever there is no holiday. The other images are for New Year, Australia Day, Valentine's Day, Easter, Christmas, Boxing Day and the holiday season.

Once you have the images and the file holiday.htm in the same directory, you can test the page by loading it into your browser. You'll see a message appropriate to the time of year and the image that goes with it. To test the page further, you'll need to change your system date. To do this, double-click the time display in the taskbar and change the date in the dialog (see Figure 2). Select Refresh or Reload in your browser to check that the image and text change as the date changes.

Dates you can use to test the JavaScript, which should invoke changes in the text and images, are January 1, 26, February 14, April 2, December 2, 25 and 26. In most cases, the JavaScript code results in the image appearing for a period of a few days before each date.

How it works

The JavaScript begins by creating a new instance of the date object, called currentDate, which contains information about the current date and time. Once this date object is created, you can use any of the date methods to extract information from it. The methods used here are getDate, getMonth and getYear. The method getDate returns the day of the month in the range 1-31; getMonth returns the month number in the range 0-11, so you must add one to this to get month numbers in the range 1-12. The method getYear isn't used in this script but is included in case you want to use it in yours. It will return a two-digit year.

The variables welcomeText and imageFile are loaded with text and an image filename which will appear on the page if they aren't replaced by another statement later on in the script.

Once the current day and month are known, you can use them to test whether today is one of the special holidays that will trigger a special image and text. A series of IF tests compares a holiday date against the current date and, if a match is found, the welcomeText and imageFile variables are assigned new values — text appropriate to the holiday and an image to suit. Note that the symbol == is used to test equivalence and && represents the AND operator.

The IF statements are nested so each is evaluated until a match is found. If a match is found they are exited immediately and no further IF statements are evaluated. You will find that, because of this behaviour, you must be careful of the ordering of the statements and make sure you place them so that a specific date appears above a catch-all one.

SOURCE BOX

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Holiday page</TITLE>
<BODY BGCOLOR = maroon TEXT=corn-
silk>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE = "Javascript">
<!—
        currentDate = new Date();
        var currentDay =
currentDate.getDate();
        var currentMonth =
currentDate.getMonth() + 1;
        //the date isn't used but is included
for completeness
        //it is a two digit number in the
range 00-99
        var currentYear =
currentDate.getYear();

        //set the default text and image if no
current holiday
        welcomeText = "Welcome to my
site"
        imageFile = "welcome.gif"

        //test for holidays and set text and
images to suit first match
        if ((currentDay == 1) &&
(currentMonth == 1)) {
            welcomeText = "Happy<BR>New
Year!";
            imageFile = "newyear.gif";

} else if ((currentDay <= 26) && (currentDay
>= 20) && (currentMonth == 1)) {
            welcomeText =
"Happy<BR>Australia Day";
            imageFile = "aust.gif";

} else if ((currentDay <= 14) &&
(currentMonth == 2)) {
            welcomeText =
"Happy<BR>Valentines Day";
            imageFile = "heart.gif";

} else if ((currentDay <= 6) && (currentMonth
== 4)) {
            welcomeText =
"Happy<BR>Easter";
            imageFile = "easter.gif";

} else if ((currentDay == 25) &&
(currentMonth == 12)) {
            welcomeText =
"Happy<BR>Christmas";
            imageFile = "christmas.gif";

} else if ((currentDay == 26) &&
(currentMonth == 12)) {
            welcomeText =
"Happy<BR>Boxing Day";
            imageFile = "boxing.gif";

} else if (currentMonth == 12) {
            welcomeText =
"Seasons<BR>Greetings";
            imageFile = "season.gif";
}
        //compose the HTML for the page
into a variable pageText
        pageText = '<center><img src=' +
imageFile + '>'
        pageText += '<P><H1>' +
welcomeText
        //write the HTML to the screen
        document.writeln(pageText)
//—>
</SCRIPT>
<NOSCRIPT>Your browser doesn't support
scripts</NOSCRIPT>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

Consider these IF statements for dates in December:

```
else if ((currentDay == 25) && (currentMonth == 12)) {
...;
} else if ((currentDay == 26) && (currentMonth == 12)) {
...;
} else if (currentMonth == 12) {
...;
```

The 25th is tested first. If there is a match the variables are assigned new values and the program moves on past the last IF statement. If no match is found, the 26th is tested; if there is a match, the variables are assigned new values and the program moves on past the last IF statement. Only if the

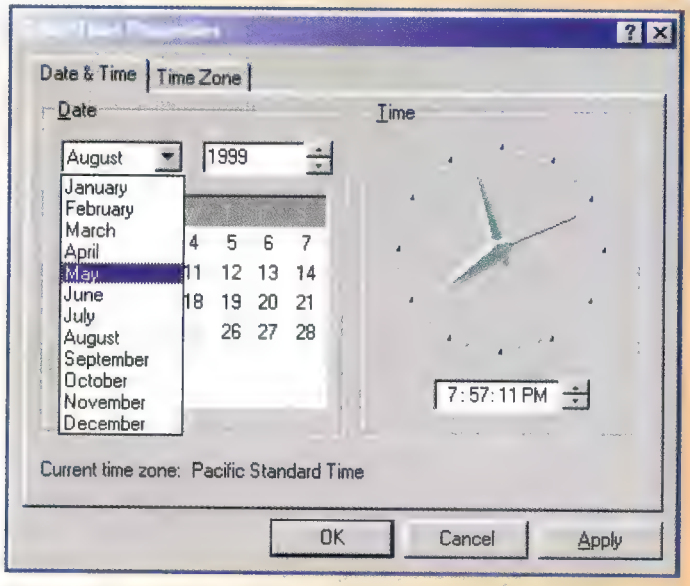


Figure 2: To test the project, you'll need to change your system date and then refresh the page in your browser.

date is neither the 25th nor the 26th is any date in December tested. You can see that if the third statement were moved above the other two then neither the 25th or 26th of December would ever be tested because the program would exit as soon as a date in December was reached and the variables had been assigned their new values.

If, for example, you want to include an image just for Valentine's Day and another image for the month of February, test for the 14th first and then for a date anywhere in February.

Once the dates have been tested, a series of statements build up the string (pageText) containing the HTML for the Web page. Every tag used on the page must appear in the string and the variables imageFile and welcomeText are used to supply the image for the <IMG> tag and the text for the page. Note that the symbol += is an assignment operator and (a += b) is a shorthand way of writing (a = a + b).

```
pageText = '<center><img src=' + imageFile + '>'
pageText += '<P><H1>' + welcomeText
```

Finally a document.writeln statement is used to write the string pageText to HTML document as if its contents were contained in the page <BODY> tag.

Adapting the code

Once you have this page up and running, you can alter it to suit your own needs. Work out the date ranges that you want to create special images and text for on paper, create and save the images, then add an IF test to your HTML to test for that date. Load the new page in the browser and test the date and others around it by changing your system date to make sure that the page works as expected.

You'll find it easier to troubleshoot mistakes if you only add one date at a time and test each as you go — the fewer the changes you make at once, the easier it is to trace a problem!

You might add this code to a small pop-up window so it appears every time your home page loads (see Figure 3), or use the concept to control the image and text on any page on your Web site.

Browser compatibility

The source code example in this tutorial works fine with the fourth-generation browsers IE4.0 and Navigator 4 and later versions, as well as some earlier versions.

If you're using a JavaScript-enabled browser that has been configured not to evaluate scripts, or if your browser doesn't support a scripting language, you will see some text on the page indicating this. This is achieved by placing text after the script and inside the <NOSCRIPT>..</NOSCRIPT> tag pair. This text won't display if your browser has JavaScript capability and it is enabled.

Helen Bradley can be contacted at helen@helenbradley.com.

PC User Productivity Disc

You'll find the file holiday.htm on this month's cover disc. Create the images listed in this column and it's ready to use.

Figure 3: Once you have the page up and running, you can customise it or use it as the foundation of a pop-up window on your site.

Add shape to your site images

Make your scanned photos any shape you like. ***Helen Bradley*** *shows you how in this tutorial.*

Your scanned photos don't have to be rectangular — you can make them any shape you like for your documents and Web pages. You'll need a copy of PaintShop Pro, which you can download from www.jasc.com/psp.html.

Selecting simple shapes

You can cut out a simple shape using the Selection tool. Make sure the Control Palette is visible by selecting View, ToolBars, selecting the Control Palette box and clicking OK.

Use the Selection tool and choose Shape from the drop-down list. Choose a shape and select the area on your photo, then select Image, Crop to Selection to remove the excess image. Alternatively, you can use the Copy and Paste buttons.

More complex shapes

More complex shapes require a selection for cutting out the shape, which is easy to do in Paintshop Pro. Design the shape as a PaintShop Pro selection, then save it as an .SEL file. Then load it into another image and use it to cut the image.

Figure 2 shows how a shape can be cut from an image. The image was rotated by selecting Image, Rotate, and Right was selected from the Direction options. Free was selected from the Degrees options, set to 45 and OKed.

You'll usually need to adjust the size to match the photo you're using. Select Image, Resize, and use the options there to adjust the image size by selecting Percentage of Original and set it to 200% Width x Height to double the image size.

Use the Magic Wand tool to select the inside of the heart. You can tinker with the Tolerance setting to adjust the colour. Experiment until you get a suitable selection; you'll see its outline as a series of 'marching ants'. Save it by choosing Selections, Save To Disk, giving it a name and clicking OK. Switch to the image you want to cut the shape from, select Selections, Load From Disk and select the file you just saved.

To move the selection, select the Mover tool and use the right mouse button to drag it. To change the size, select Selections, Modify, Expand or Contract and adjust the number of pixels until the shape fits your image.

For the image in Figure 2 we used Selection, Modify, Feather and set the number of pixels to 10. We changed the background colour to white and selected Image, Crop to Selection.

Broken-hearted

The heart was created by enlarging the shape to match the dimensions of the photo, selecting each side using the Magic Wand tool and saving the selections separately.

A new image was created at the same size as the original with a white background and each 'shape' was copied from the original photo using one of the selections and pasted into the new image by selecting Edit, Copy in the photo and then switching to the new image and selecting Edit, Paste, As New Selection. The final image was cropped to size.

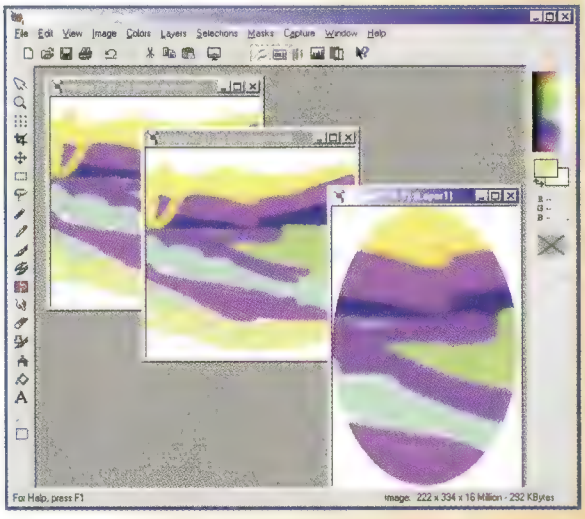


Figure 1: Simple shapes like circles and ellipses can be used to cut out photos or, as we've done here, Easter eggs.

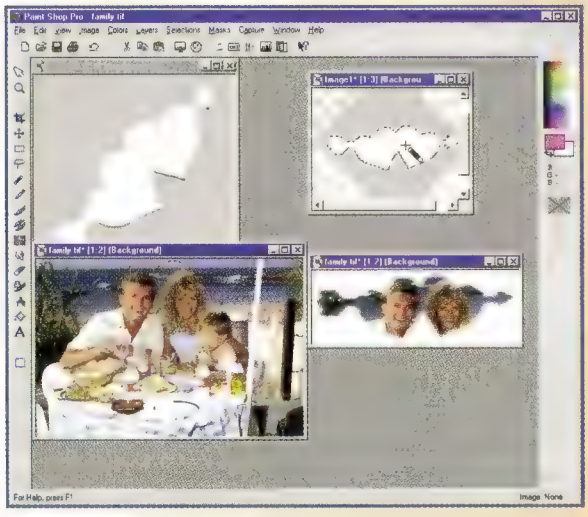


Figure 2: The heart image has been used to give this family photo a romantic treatment.

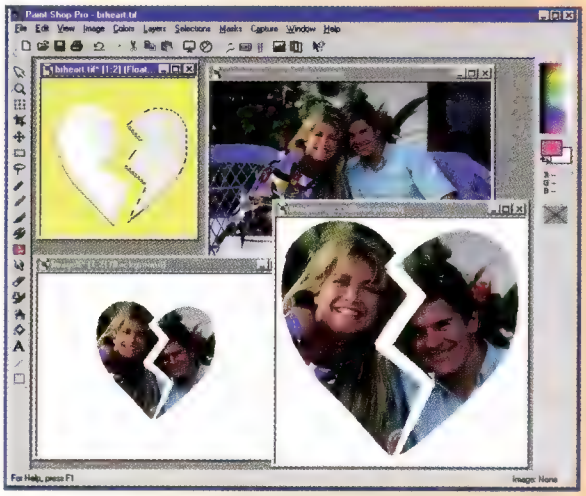


Figure 3: The meaning of this photo has been altered by using of the broken heart to shape the image.

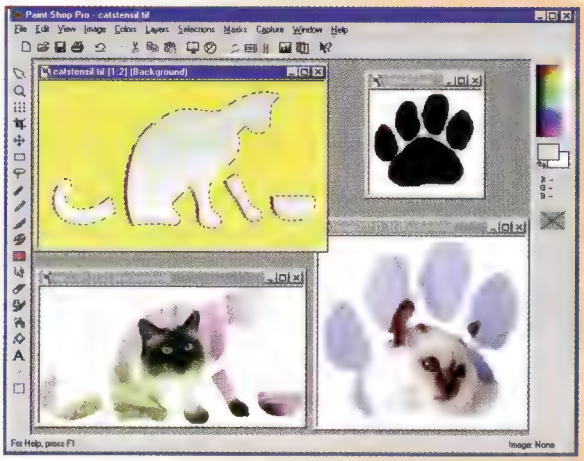


Figure 4: A scanned stencil and a clipart image have been used here to create two simple shapes to allow a more interesting presentation of the cats' photos.

Getting shapes from images

You can use the Magic Wand tool to select the background of the image, then use Selection, Invert to select everything except the background. You can add to or subtract from a shape by clicking the Freehand tool and holding the Ctrl key as you draw freehand around a selected area to remove it from the selection. To add shapes, select the Magic Wand or Freehand tool and hold the Shift key while you select an area. Save to disk and use the shape to 'cut' a shape from a photo or simply cut a shape from a coloured background or texture.

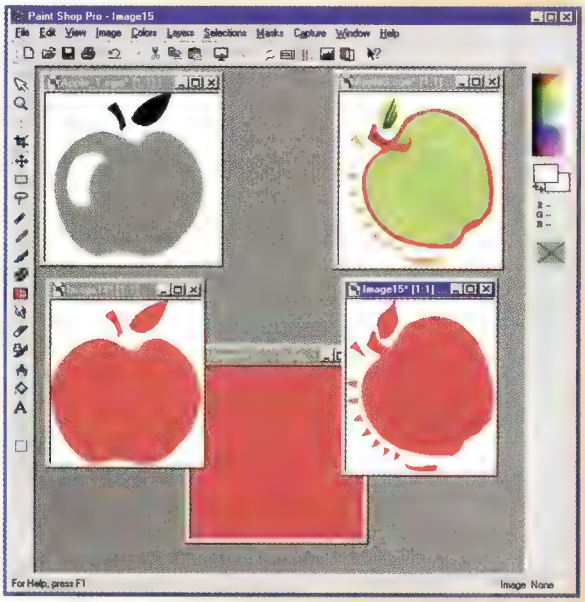


Figure 5: These two clipart images have been used to create a simple apple shapes which have then been cut from a simple red background to create simple but effective pictures.

Text-shaped images

You can easily create a great text effect in PaintShop Pro by putting an image or texture under text. Locate an image large enough for the text to fit over it and open it in PaintShop Pro.

Create a new document and make it 600 by 200 pixels and 16.7 million colours. Set the background colour to white and the foreground colour to black (or the background colour of your Web page). Enable the Antialias and Floating checkboxes, click OK and type your text. Deselect the text. Swap the colours by selecting the small two-headed arrow on the Color Palette. Copy the entire image using Edit, Copy and click to select it. Select Edit, Paste, As Transparent Selection and move it until it appears in the position you want over the background image, then select Selections, None. Select the portion of the image you want and crop and save it. ❑

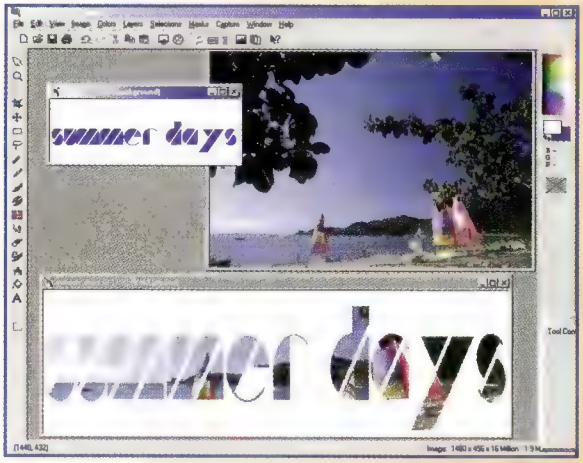


Figure 6: You can get a wonderful effect for a document or Web site by creating text filled with a photographic image.

This month's problems solved

WINDOWS 95/98

Internet horror

Q Whenever I try to open my connection, I get this error: 'RUNDLL32 caused a general protection fault in module Tapi.dll at 0014:00007649'.

After this, it usually results in a crash, restart and scandisk run. However, if it doesn't crash the first time, I can open the program and connect to the Net. I was looking in my system properties and found that there were two modems installed. I removed the incorrect one but the problem still plagues me.

I am running Windows 95 4.00.950 B and IE5 on a P200 MMX 32Mb. The modem is a Rockwell external 56K V.90 fax modem.

E Trimboli
Dubbo, NSW

A: It's possible that this is caused by C:\Windows\System\Netdi.dll and/or Netos.dll being damaged or missing. Try reinstalling those files from the .CAB files on your Windows installation CD.

Noise nuisance

Q: I have a problem with my Pentium 75 with 32Mb of RAM and Windows 98. I am trying to run a Creative Sound Blaster 16. Every time I try to play a sound, it plays the first few milliseconds of the sound and then it locks up. This is very annoying, as I like to play network games but my friends complain about not having sound. I went to the Creative Web site, downloaded all the latest drivers and even followed the online instructions I found there. Before I installed Windows 98, I had Windows 95 and the sound card worked perfectly. I have formatted and re-installed Windows 98 many times, and completely removed the drivers and installed the latest ones in their place, but it still didn't work. I have removed the sound card from Control Panel, System, Device Manager and installed the DOS drivers, and that allowed me to play the DOS games I wanted to

HOW TO ASK OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS! www.pcuser.com.au

There's a new way to ask your questions — on the Web. Draw on the combined expertise of the PC User team of writers.

Direct your questions to Jan Wikström or one of our other experienced writers online. We will endeavour to answer as many of your questions as possible, and in most cases answers will be posted on the site within 24 hours. A selection of the best questions and answers in the various categories will appear on these pages each month.

As usual, if you want your question aswered, you need to supply enough detail for us to get an accurate picture of the problem, starting with name and address (anonymous letters and e-mails will be ignored). We need to know the type of processor and which version of Windows you are using, and what's in your autoexec.bat and config.sys files (if any). MSD reports are very useful (MSD is Microsoft Diagnostics, a utility that comes with DOS and Windows 3.x), or else we like to see a System Summary printout (from the Windows 95 System applet or the Windows 98 System Information applet) either on paper or in a file.

Jan's tip for the System Summary printout in file form: the file it creates is coded, and if we don't have the same printer, we can't read it. Install the Generic/Text Only printer driver and use that when you print to file; it creates a plain ASCII text file that we can read with Notepad.

When your problem involves an error message, quote the message text exactly but without the register details. This is important. We may also need to know what programs were running at the time, including TSRs and background processes. If you have a recurring problem with software or the system crashing or halting, run Dr Watson (it comes with Windows 95 and 98) and send us a copy of the log file it generates (it has the extension .WLG).

Please send screen dumps in GIF format only using Paint Shop Pro or something similar.

Please note: Personal technical support cannot be provided, and not all questions can be answered. Contact the supplier or retailer of the offending product first.

Questions in non-electronic form can be sent PC User, *GPO Box 4088, Sydney 1028.*

play, but every time I reboot, Windows 98 finds it and asks to install the drivers. I have included the system files from that computer. Please help me!

Also, I would like to know what advantages a 56K serial modem has compared with a 56K USB modem.
Chris Holzworth
Qld

A: This sounds like a conflict. Check your Control Panel, System, Device Manager for interrupt or port conflicts. The Device Manager may not show a conflict, but if the sound card is sharing an interrupt with some other device, try changing it to share with some other device if there is no unused interrupt. As for the modems, there is no functional difference between serial and USB modems.

Q2: I have done that, but it still doesn't work. There is a yellow exclamation point next to the card. The MIDI plays but the sound doesn't. It works in DOS when I have the drivers up.
Chris

A2: The exclamation point means the marked driver isn't working properly, and in your case it's most likely there is a conflict. One thing about the Windows 98 installer is that it installs the plug and play stuff first, then the old cards. This means that the stupid thing assigns ports and interrupts to plug and play stuff, which then may conflict with fixed assignments of old devices, as they are not known to the system at first. The only way out of that is to change the assignments of one of the conflicting devices — either the old Sound Blaster 16 (see the instructions that came with the card) or the plug and play device that is conflicting with it. The device manager will tell you when the conflict is resolved.

Buckley's backup

Q: I am running Windows 95A and have encountered a registry problem after I installed Internet Explorer 5 (I had Internet Explorer 4.01 and decided to upgrade). I have attached a BMP image of the error that appeared after the computer rebooted. [The error message is the one about 'Registry error, restore from a backup and restart'.]

Even though I did 'restore from backup and restart', it did not seem to get rid of this message, which appears every time I start Windows. The frustrating part is that Windows seems to work OK, nothing seems to be broken, yet I can't get rid of this silly message, even if I put the mouse on the 'X' in the top right of the message box. I have Norton Utilities installed with the live update function, so I do have the latest version of this software and have had it for about a year now, yet when I run all the checks, it doesn't come up with anything. What can I do to remove this message box?

Could you also tell me how to upgrade from Windows 95A to 95C?
Gavino Sanna
Internet

A: The reason this message persists is most likely that the backup copy has the same fault as the main copy; you can try running Windows Setup from the CD, which can correct many errors. Since you're thinking about upgrading, a better solution would be to get Windows 98 SE and install that. There's no point in bothering with 95C. Here's the easiest method:

1. Insert the Windows 98 CD and answer 'yes' when it offers to install Windows 98. Proceed to the stage where you have created the startup disk, then abort.
2. Test that the startup disk works and that it lets you use the CD reader.
3. Delete Windows 95 (the simplest way is to format the hard disk).
4. Reboot from the startup disk, insert the CD and make a clean Windows 98 installation. The install wizard will ask for a qualifying product if it's the upgrade version you have; give it the Windows 95 CD and follow all prompts.

Floppy boots

Q: I read in *PC User* July 1999 how to create the three boot-up floppies from the CD (page 115). Is there a similar procedure for Windows 95? Is there a way to create a complete set of installation floppy disks from a Windows 95 CD? I have an old laptop that doesn't have a CD drive.
Andrew Roubin
Coopers Plains, Qld

A: The article you mention refers to Windows NT, which is different in many important ways. To create a Startup Disk for Windows 95, just select Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs and click the Startup Disk tab, then follow instructions. Mind you, the disk may not work properly unless you create it on the same machine.

Installation floppies for Windows 95 are a completely different matter. Some machines that came with Windows 95 installed in the early days of Windows 95b came with a special program that let you 'back-create' a floppy installation set, but that was dropped very quickly, as users demanded a proper CD.

To make up your own set of installation floppies from the CD, you need to format the floppies in a special format that holds 1.6Mb instead of 1.4Mb (because that's the size of the .CAB files), which is Microsoft's way of making it harder to copy its installation disks (it incidentally saves a couple of disks in each set). I recall seeing some shareware programs that will format 1.6Mb long ago.

You can buy Windows 95 on floppies, of course, in a cut-down version; I recall something like 25 or 27 floppies. Possibly your best option is to get a pair of cheap networking cards (if your old notebook has a spare internal slot) and network the notebook with a desktop machine that has a CD reader; you can then install Windows 95 (or, for that matter, 98, if the machine is 486/66 or better) from the CD via the network. You can also copy the Win95 folder (60Mb) or Win98

(170Mb) to the hard disk of the notebook and install from there.

Another possible solution is to use the Windows 95 desktop to create a zip archive of the Win95 folder on floppies and un-archive that on the notebook; the drawback here is that you'll need over 50 floppies and a lot of time.

Takeover terror

Q: I would greatly appreciate advice regarding a problem I have with Outlook Express, which I have also had with IE5. After every Outlook session, Dr Watson pops up with the following message: 'aolsp.dll used a system resource improperly Module name:aolsp.dll Application name:msimn.exe description:outlook express'. I have received exactly the same message for the last 15 or so faults

Microsoft was not able to assist. According to its database, msimn may have some newsgroup application. A file called aolsp.dll exists in Windows, but when I temporarily removed it, my Internet connection ceased to function.

My computer is new, with Windows 98, and it has been well maintained. Is AOL taking over my computer?
Michael Fitchman
Bilgola Plateau, NSW

A: Aolsp.dll is not normally part of Windows; it would seem to indicate that an AOL subscription has been installed on your computer at some stage. I don't know of a simple way to get rid of it, but you might try this:

1. Run Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs, Windows Setup.
2. Under Communications, uncheck Dial-Up Networking and click OK. Change nothing else. Restart as required.
3. Delete Aolsp.dll.
4. Repeat 1, but this time tick Dial-Up Networking and click OK.

This should install a fresh set of dial-up networking system files and set up DUN properly in the registry. You may need to set up a fresh DUN icon for your present ISP.

As for msimn.exe, that's the program file name of Outlook Express.

Dial-a-network

Q: I have a very small query: is there a way to get IPX to work over a dial-up connection? (I mean by setting up a dial-up server on my PC and having a friend dial in.)
George Tsaousidis
Internet

A: If the machine you want to dial up is on an IPX (Novell) network with a licensed server, you can indeed set up a dial-up server and dial in with a machine that has the IPX protocol and an IPX client set up; both are included in Windows 95/98. The dial-up server is included in Windows 98. If you have Windows 95, you'll need to install Microsoft Plus! or upgrade to 98. You will also need to set the dial-up client to log onto the network.

HARDWARE

Pentium is as Pentium does

Q: My computer is a Cyrix 686L 200+ Windows 95b with the upgrades 2.1Mb hard drive and 64Mb SDRAM. I decided to upgrade the video card to 3D to get better sound, so I bought Sound Blaster Live. Thank you Creative: the message I got was 'This machine is not running a Pentium processor so installation will stop. Retry when a Pentium processor is installed' (I didn't know Bill Gates had his finger in that pie as well). Great when you do not have access to the Internet. I have downloaded the required drivers from Sound Blaster Live. Is there any other way around this problem if it occurs with other software?
Rod MacDonald
Internet

A: This is nothing to do with Bill Gates, but rather with the builders of el cheapo substitute chips. Creative has chosen to maximise the performance of its products by taking full advantage of the Pentium architecture — especially the built-in floating point maths support, which is vital in 3D applications. Cyrix and others have reduced their prices by leaving out floating point support and other, more esoteric details. There's nothing wrong with this in principle, as the substitute chips have excellent performance in integer maths operations and are therefore well suited to business applications (except large spreadsheets). The quarrel I have with them is that they dishonestly advertise 'superior to Pentium xxx', instead of saying 'a fine business chip, but if you want to run 3D games, get a Pentium'.

The drivers you have downloaded allow the Creative product to run on your system by simulating the Pentium, with necessarily reduced performance. This, unfortunately, is the only way to make a Pentium-specific item run with a non-Pentium processor.

Unrecognised modem

Q: I have recently reinstalled my NetComm Roadster modem. Now every time Windows 98 boots, it stalls halfway with a message that it has found new hardware (the NetComm modem) and wants to go through the installation wizard. I cancel the wizard to allow the Windows boot to complete.
Leonard Spira
Noosa, NSW

A: The answer is very simple: let the wizard go ahead and install what it thinks the modem is. This won't change anything in the way your dial-up networking is set up, so your preferred

modem driver will still operate. You can have several modem drivers set up without affecting anything materially.

Slowpoke

Q: I have upgraded from WFW 3.11 to Windows 95. I was running a Pentium 120 which seemed slow, so I added another 32Mb of RAM, a new hard drive and 40X CD-ROM, and changed the processor to a Cyrix 266. The motherboard only runs at 200MHz, so this is the speed of the Cyrix as well now.

My problem is that, according to the person who performed the upgrade, the computer seems to be running slowly. It doesn't run Windows 95 games very quickly at all, and the screen updates are jerky. I looked at the Bootlog.txt file produced when Windows 95 boots up and found a few files loaded more than once. GDI.EXE, for example. Is this normal, or is it a problem left over from the WFW upgrade?

I have included the Config.sys, Autoexec.bat and Bootlog.txt files.

Michael Duffy
Internet

A: Upgrading from Windows 3.11 to 95 is definitely a Bad Move. Iit's far better to format the hard disk and install Windows 95 from scratch. That's a general rule. I don't know exactly what's wrong in your case, as you didn't include Config.sys and Autoexec.bat. The multiple loading of various files in Bootlog is not necessarily a problem; my own machine loads GDI.exe five or six times.

As for the speed of the Cyrix 266, that number doesn't mean it's meant to run at that speed. It means that Cyrix cslaims it's as powerful as a Pentium s266, which is partly true as long as you don't try to do floating point maths.

APPLICATIONS

Getting formal

Q: I am a bit stumped regarding this problem: How do you actually fill out a document that you have constructed on Publisher 98? Can you get it to 'Word' or 'Access', and if so, how do you get it there? I have tried to export and import and everything else I can think of, but to no avail.

I run a small business with a partner and we have constructed our stationery on Publisher 98, but would like to fill out these documents on the computer. Can you please tell us how?

A Lindhard
Internet

A: As far as I know, Publisher 98 cannot produce electronic forms, only the sort you print and fill in on paper. Word can produce electronic forms, but I can't help you with details about the methods, as I have never done it myself. There are full details in the Help file of Word.

Internet blues

Q: I am getting very frustrated with trying to download files from the Internet, in particular files larger than 4 or 5Mb.

I am a part-time computer reseller who, until recently, has had no real need nor inclination to use the Net. I have attached a generic system summary as you specified in the June issue. My processor is actually a Pentium III 500. (I understand that Windows doesn't recognise it correctly, if only in the naming sense.) I am running Windows 95B with the USB support add-on, and am moving to Windows 98 in the next week or so. I had Windows NT 4 to begin with, but was unaware that it didn't have USB support built in for my modem and mouse, so I moved back to Windows 95 for the time being.

I accept that at least part of my problem is lack of experience with the Net, but I can't help feeling that there must be an easier and more efficient means of successful downloading. I have tried using download and browser accelerators with some success, but am rapidly becoming very disillusioned about the whole exercise.

Errol Wilkinson
Internet

A: The main problem with downloading files over the Internet is line quality. Natural noise on the line is seldom an issue, as modern modems will negotiate a speed and transmission mode that guarantees correct data transfer, but there are other items that may need looking into. Call waiting, for instance, can cause a modem to shut down, and if you have this service, you should send the code that disables it before you go online. Telstra's first models of Touchfone 200 had a habit of hooking up every 20 minutes to charge their batteries, which would knock out any modem. There are few of those phones left, but you should check that you don't have one. There are other problems of the same nature, such as somebody in your house lifting an extension phone at the wrong moment, or one that I've had myself: ticking from a shorted electric fence being picked up by the phone line.

Some ISPs even shut you down if there is no transmission activity (although this is pretty rare nowadays); you might find that your download works if you surf gently at the same time to keep the connection 'active'. You haven't mentioned how long the download takes to fail, which could be significant.

There are utilities that will record how much of the download has been completed and allow you to pick up from that point when you try again. Check out any shareware source on the Internet.

In case I have misunderstood your problem and it's not about download failure ats all but low speed, this is regrettably something users can do little about. Yes, a fast modem and a good line can ensure high transfer rates between you

and the ISP, but that's very rarely the bottleneck. The information from the server you're connected to may have to pass 20 to 30 'jumps', each of which may have speed limitations due to traffic. Worse still, that server may be loaded so close to its capacity that it can only pass on a few hundred bytes a second to each of the users at that moment, and even that may be intermittent.

If that's what happens, there are a couple of ways you can live with it. One is to do several downloads at the same time from different servers. This doesn't reduce the waiting for each item, but if you can wait for several things at the same time, the total time is less. Another tip is to do your downloading at a time when the server is less busy because most of its customers are at work or asleep. If the server is in North or South America, for instance, try to do the download when US East Coast time is about 07.00; that's when local traffic is low over most of America.

Saving it all

Q: I have Netscape 4.04 on a Compaq Armada 1530 with Windows 95. When I open a page on the Net and save it, even though the images are shown while the page is open, they do not show when I reopen those saved pages offline. The images are stored in the cache, as far as I can tell, but the reopened pages simply have image frames. Can this be overcome and if so, how?
Angelo Giovas
Nambour, Qld

A: One way is to right-click each image and select 'Save As' before saving the page. This won't let you view the original page with pictures, but at least you have the images to look at separately. Another way is to use an HTML editor that can save complete pages; the problem there is that not all Web pages let you log on with an editor. The simplest solution is to change to MS Internet Editor 5.0, which by default saves complete pages with images, but you may not wish to sacrifice other aspects of Netscape.

Bug Patrol

***Rose Vines** presents her monthly round-up of bugs.*

WordPerfect Office 2000

Service Pack 1

Corel has released the first service pack for WordPerfect Office 2000. It tips the scales at 36Mb, so we've done the downloading for you and included it on this month's cover disc.

The service pack upgrades the Standard, Voice Powered and Professional editions of WP Office 2000. It upgrades WordPerfect 9, Quattro Pro 9, Presentations 9, CorelCentral 9 and PerfectFit 9 to Version 9.0.0.588, and Paradox 9 to Version 9.0.0.441.

You'll find around 140 fixes and enhancements included in the Service Pack — basically, there's something for everyone. We've also included the release notes and the licence (please read it before you install the update). Here's a taste of what's included:

- Installation of New Components fixed.
- New Document Compare command in WP 9.
- Problems with Print dialog, Copy/Paste and File Open Preview, and Equation Editor in WP 9 fixed.
- WP 9 now features an improved File Open.
- A range of stability issues have been fixed in Quattro Pro 9.
- Quattro Pro 9 now has an improved Find and Replace feature.
- TrueType fonts are now included in the Presentations font list.
- Presentations now has enhanced object linking and embedding (OLE).
- You can now scroll the Calendar in Month View in CorelCentral.
- CorelCentral's performance and stability have been improved.
- TWAIN support has been added to Paradox 9.
- Toolbar loading problems have been eliminated.

CorelDraw 9

Service Pack 1

Corel has also released a service pack for CorelDraw 9. Service Pack 1 updates CorelDraw 9, Corel Photo-Paint 9, CorelTrace 9, Corel Texture 9 and Corel Capture 9 from the original 9.337 release number to Version 9.397.

The service pack is nearly 13Mb, so we've included it on this month's cover disc for you. It fixes a number of bugs and anomalies and adds some extras to extend the product's usefulness. We've also included Corel's licence agreement for the download.

WordPerfect 9

Saving to RTF files

Beware of saving files in rich text format (RTF) in WordPerfect 9, as the program has an unnerving habit of

truncating any document saved in that format.

Rich text format is frequently used to allow users of different word processors to exchange documents. The format maintains much, although certainly not all, of the formatting of the document, making it a very handy bridge.

Unfortunately, you'll want to avoid using RTF format at all in WordPerfect 9 until a fix is released. If you're desperate to use RTF files, the solution is to try saving over and over again. WordPerfect occasionally saves the file correctly, so if you try repeatedly you may succeed. It's not much of a workaround, but it's all there is at the moment.

WordPerfect 8 for Linux

Network security hole

If you're running Corel's WordPerfect 8 for Linux on a networked Linux system, you should be aware of a security flaw that could allow intruders access to files on the networked computers.

The fix is to make sure you do not install WordPerfect 8 for Linux as 'root'. This involves a small change in the installation process, but as the instructions are fairly lengthy, we've included them on this month's cover disc rather than in this column. Alternatively, you can read them for yourself at http://linux.corel.com/wp8_linuxfix.htm.

CorelDraw 8

EPS filter limitations

If you export a file from CorelDraw 8 using the Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file format and then try to re-import it, you may find yourself unable to edit it and the file resolution may look poor. This happens because importing a file using the EPS filter imports only the header and not the full image.

You can easily get around this by importing the file using the PostScript Interpreted filter.

PC User Productivity Disc

On this month's *PC User* cover disc you'll find:

Corel WordPerfect Office 2000: Service Pack 1 (wp9sp1.exe) with the release notes (WP Office 2000 Release Notes.htm) and the licence (WP Office 2000 SP1 disclaimer.htm)

CorelDraw 9: Service Pack 1 for CorelDraw 9 Graphics Suite or Corel Photo-Paint 9 (gr9sp1en.exe) and the licence agreement (CorelDraw 9 disclaimer.htm).

Corel WordPerfect 8 for Linux: Instructions for closing the security hole for networked installations (WP 8 for Linux security fix.htm).

Moto Racer 2: Version 1.34 updater (mr2update.zip).

Internet Explorer 5

Program, debug thyself

One of the most welcome trends in new Microsoft programs is their ability to diagnose, heal and update themselves. Windows 98, for instance, includes a Windows Update option on the Start Menu and a notification utility that alerts you to new bug fixes, updates and add-ons for the operating system. Internet Explorer goes one further and includes a tool to repair itself if any of its files become corrupted. The only problem is the tool is buried where most people are unlikely to look for it.

If you find Internet Explorer 5 starts behaving strangely, gives you repeated errors or seems to perform poorly, you can give the self-repair tool a try. To do so:

1. Close any open copies of Internet Explorer.
2. Click the Start Menu, select Settings and Control Panel, and double-click Add/Remove Programs to open the Add/Remove Programs dialog box.
3. In the Add/Remove Programs dialog, scroll down the list to Microsoft Internet Explorer 5 (it may read Microsoft Internet Explorer 5 and Internet Tools), highlight it and click the Add/Remove button.
4. In the dialog that's displayed, select Repair Internet Explorer, click OK and answer Yes to the subsequent dialog box.

The repair tool will try to fix corrupted files and replace any deleted files. You may need to have your Windows 98 or Internet Explorer 5 disk on hand, although with most installations the necessary backup files are stored on your hard disk.

If the repair tool finds problems that are beyond its abilities to fix, it will prompt you to reinstall Internet Explorer 5.

Moto Racer 2

Updater

The 1.34 update for Moto Racer 2 from Maxis provides major performance and compatibility boosts to the game. The update provides 3D sound support for DirectSound 3D and EAX-compatible sound cards, improved memory management, improved TCP/IP support (for online play), improved support for Force Feedback joysticks, new support for wheels and Cyrix processors, and overall speed enhancements. Well worth grabbing from our cover disc. ❑

PC USER AUSTRALIAN

NOVEMBER 1999

Showcase

Advertisers' Deals of the Month

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2000 PREMIUM UPGRADE

Purchase MS Office 2000 Premium Upgrade during the month of November for $630 (RRP $729). Fill in the attached coupon and get $50 rebate.

From: Corporate Software Australia
Phone: (02) 9725 3700
Web: www.corpsoft.com.au

$630 recieve $50 rebate

See pages 126-127

INKJET REFILLS

New Reality Resources, Australia's leader in inkjet refill solutions, is offering a free refill kit to all customers who purchase a mix of any three kits. Just buy three and get one free!

From: New Reality Resources
Phone: 1800 680 605

4 FOR FOR THE PRICE OF 3

See pages 124-125

ADAPTEC CD CREATOR 4.0

Create music, photo, video and data CDs. Access music on the Internet. Fine-tune your music tracks. Edit and enhance photos and videos with a pro's touch.

From: Mail Order Software
Phone: (07) 9663 9111
Web: www.mailordersoftware.com.au

$129.95

See page 134

DELL DIMENSION XPS T450

Designed for small businesses, the Dell Dimension XPS T450 has a 450MHz Intel Pentium III, 64Mb 100MHz SDRAM, 6.4Gb Ultra ATA hard drive, 32Mb nVidia TNT2 M64 2X AGP graphics card, 48X CD-ROM drive, and 15in monitor.

From: Dell Computer
Phone: (02) 9930 3355
Web: www.dell.com

$1999 plus freight

See pages 70-71

COMPUCON

Intel Celeron 400, Intel i810 100MHz motherboard, 32Mb SDRAM, 6.4Gb hard drive, 40X CD-ROM drive, 15in digital multimedia monitor, three years onsite warranty.

From: Compucon Computers
Phone: 1300 139 999
Web: www.compucon.com

$1550

See page 19

CLASSIC GAMES COLLECTION

The classic games collection comprises games for everyone at a great price. Mention this ad to receive 10% off any title in the classic game range.

From: Gamesmen
Phone: (02) 9580 9888
Web: www.gamesmen.com.au

FROM $19.95 recieve 10% discount

See page 91

COMPUTERS DIRECT AUSTRALIA

Call the office closest to you for all your computing needs. We supply computers based on the same systems used in the comprehensive CPU review in this issue.

From: Computers Direct Australia
Phone: (08) 9388 8488
Web: www.computersdirect.com.au

$1495

See pages 32-34

TYPEQUICK LEARN TO TYPE

Typequick's classic program will teach you to type quickly and easily and at your own pace, just by following 10 straightforward one-hour lessons.

From: Typequick
Phone: (02) 9498 7433
Web: www.typequick.com.au

$99

See page 81

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How to participate: The Advertisers' Deals of the Month page is open to submissions from all companies who take out at least one full-page ad in that edition of *Australian PC User*. For more information contact (02) 9288 9146.

AUSTRALIA'S NO.1 REFILL KITS

NEW REALITY'S REFILL KITS ARE THE SMART ALTERNATIVE TO BUYING COSTLY ORIGINAL CARTRIDGES!

SAVE AT LEAST 80%
AND BE PRINTING AGAIN IN NO TIME!

New Reality Resources Pty. Ltd.

BUY 3 GET 1 FREE

WHY USE OUR REFILL KITS?

SATISFACTION 100% GUARANTEED

WHY BUY ORIGINAL CARTRIDGES ? WHEN YOU CAN SAVE AT LEAST 80% ON PRINTING COSTS BY FILLING WITH OUR EASY TO USE INKJET REFILL KITS!

"...I telephoned from Melbourne and after receiving courteous answers to some questions and the order given late Thursday, I was amazed to receive the parcel in Friday's morning mail..."

"...Please accept my compliments and best wishes for the future of New Reality Resources..."
E. Rossman
Caulfield North

"...Your products, particularly cartridge refilling ink kits are being used with great success in a variety of our printers..."

"...Your prompt and effective responses to our orders are appreciated and we wish you further success with your products..."
A. J. Carey
Barron & Rawson Pty Ltd

1) PRINTER WARRANTY - Using our Refill Kits will not void your printers warranty. Printer manufacturers cannot refuse to cover a repair under warranty on the basis of using refill kits, unless they can conclusively prove that the compatible brand of supply has damaged the printer. For this reason we urge uses to beware of inferior products and only use supplies that are backed by a full guarantee!

2) BETTER THAN ORIGINAL - All of our inks are the best quality to be found anywhere world-wide, they produce sharp and vivid output and we believe they exceed the original manufacturers highest quality.

3) GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR - Our product costs us more to produce than most, however, this ensures optimal printing performance and more consistent ink properties.

4) DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND - Our Refilling methods and equipment are always being simplified and improved with help from input and feedback from our customers.

5) SUPER SERVICE - Our mission at New Reality Resources is to provide levels of customer care second to none. We offer free delivery to your door and a 100% satisfaction guarantee on all our products.

6) FREE ADVICE & SUPPORT - We will help you achieve the most out of refilling and inkjet printing and even give you free independent advice when buying a new printer.

BUY SMART BUY DIRECT AND SAVE

25% OFF CANON & EPSON COMPATIBLE CARTRIDGES

Yes...we also wholesale! Dealer enquiries welcome!

New Reality Resources has no affiliation with any printer manufactures or OEM's and nor has any arrangement been made with them to form the basis for any statements we make.

FREE AUSTRALIA WIDE DELIVERY! SAME DAY DISPATCH!!
COD * MONEY ORDER * CHEQUE * MASTER * VISA * BANKCARD * AMEX ACCEPTED

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SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

INKJET REFILLS

OUR INKS ALWAYS PRINT AS GOOD, IF NOT BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL!

BLACK INKJET REFILL KITS FROM ONLY- $29.90

BLACK KITS INCLUDE SUPERIOR, DENSE & SHARP BLACK INK!!

DESCRIPTION (Kits Compatible with Printers listed below)	No. of Refills	Kit Code
CANON BJ-30/BJC-70/BJC 80	60	21-BKL
CANON BC-01/02 BJ-10E/20/BJ-200/BJC-210/210SP/240/255	9	3-BKL
CANON BJ-300/ 330	7	4-BKL
CANON BJC-600/610/620	16	5-BKL
CANON BJC-4000/4100/4200/4300/4550/5000/5500 BCI-21	45	19-BKL
CANON BJC-4000/4100/4200/4300/4550/5000/5500 BC-20	9	18-BKL
HP Desk Jet 400/500 Series	6	8A-BKL
HP Desk Jet 600/660/690 Series	6	8B-BKL
HP Desk Jet 700/850C/855C/870C/1000C Series	6	29-BKL
HP Deskjet 300 Series & Olivetti JP's!	8	7-BKL
EPSON Stylus 400/800/800+/1000	8	1-BKL
EPSON Stylus Colour /PRO/XL	8	2-BKL
EPSON Stylus 820/colour II/IIs	12	23-BKL
EPSON Stylus Colour 200/300/400/500/600/800/850/1520	12	33A-BKL
EPSON Stylus Colour 440/640/740	12	33B-BKL
IBM/LEXMARK 4076/1000/1020 Series	6	35A-BKL
IBM/LEXMARK 5000/7000 Series	6	35B-BKL
CANON, EPSON, HP Fluorescent & Photo Realistic Kits!	12	Please Call!

IMPROVED New INKS

SATISFACTION 100% GUARANTEED

AUSTRALIAN MADE

COLOUR INKJET REFILL KITS FROM ONLY- $39.90

COLOUR KITS INCLUDE CYAN, MAGENTA & YELLOW INKS!!

DESCRIPTION (Kits Compatible with Printers listed below)	No. of Refills	Kit Code
CANON BJC-70/80	3x30	22-CLR
CANON BJC-210/210SP/240/255	3x12	25-CLR
CANON BJC-600/610/620	3x8	10-CLR
CANON BJC-4000/4100/4200/4300/4550/5000/5500 BCI-21	3x30	17-CLR
HP Colour Desk Jet 300/400/500 Series & Olivetti!	3x12	14A-CLR
HP Colour Desk Jet 600C/660C/690C Series	3x12	14B-CLR
HP Desk Jet 850C/855C/870C/1000C Series	3x3	30A-CLR
HP Desk Jet 710/720/890 Series	3x3	30B-CLR
EPSON Stylus Colour /PRO/XL	3x4	16-CLR
EPSON Stylus 820/colour II/IIs	3x12	24-CLR
EPSON Stylus Colour 200/300/400/500/600/800/850/1520	3x12	34A-CLR
EPSON Stylus Colour 440/640/740	3x12	34B-CLR
IBM/LEXMARK 4076/1000/1020 Series	3x6	36A-CLR
IBM/LEXMARK 5000/7000 Series	3x6	36B-CLR
CANON, EPSON, HP Fluorescent & Photo Realistic Kits!	12/Colour	Please Call!
New!! Epson Photo 750 & Canon Photo 7100 Refill Kits!		

BUY 3 GET 1 FREE

Australia's best range of high quality papers and media also available for immediate delivery!

REUSE RECYCLE REFILL

USING NEW REALITY RESOURCES INKJET REFILL KITS WILL NOT VOID YOUR PRINTER'S WARRANTY.

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Shop 1 / 70 Redland Bay Rd
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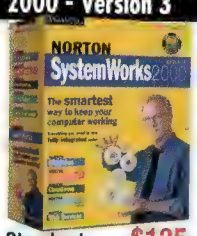
Adobe Photoshop V 5.5 (New for 99)

New Install $995
Upgrade – $349

Seagate Backup V7.3 (New from Veritas)

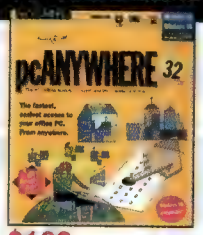
NT Server $859
NT Enterprise $1795
Win 95/98 V3 $125

NORTON SystemWorks 2000 - Version 3



Standard $125
Professional $149

PC Anywhere V9 - Host & Remote



$193

EVERY DAY LOWEST PRICES

ACT V4 for Win95/NT	$145
Adobe Acrobat V4 - New Install	$395
• SPECIAL Adobe Illustrator V8	$595
Adobe InDesign	$1199
Adobe PageMaker 6.5 PLUS	$750
Adobe Photoshop V5.5 New!!!	$995
ArcserveIT V6.6 W/Group Ed	$750
AutoCAD LT 2000 New!!!	$789
AutoCAD LT 2000 - Upgrade	$289

iGrafx Professional
NEW from Micrografx
$659
Also available iGrafx Business $330

Borland C++ Build.ProV4 - Upg	$389
Borland C++ Build.ProV4 - New	$589
Borland J Build.ProV3 - Upg	$379
Borland J Build.ProV3 - New	$589
Borland Delphi Pro V5 - New Inst.	$689
Borland Delphi Pro V5 - Upgrade	$389
ClickNet Professional V5	$495
CorelDRAW V9 - New Install	$625
CorelDRAW V9 - Upgrade (*after $50 Cashback)	$389*
Corel W/Perfect Office 2000 NEW	$369
Corel W/Perfect Office 2000 Upg	$199
Corel W/P Office 2000 +Voice NEW	$458
Corel W/P Office 2000 +Voice Upg	$258
Crystal Reports Pro V7	$580
Crystal Reports Pro V7 Upg	$330
Diskeeper V5 for NT Workstation	$99
Diskeeper V5 for NT Server	$495
Dragon Nat. Speaking **Mobile**	$365
Dragon Nat. Speaking Pref. V4	$260
Drive Image Personal Edition	$99
Drive Image Pro V3 (10 user)	$395
Easy CD Creator Deluxe V4	$120
Harvard Graphics 98	$350

Corporate Special
CD-RW Blank Media $8 ea

Lost & Found	$89
Lotus Organiser V5 - NEW	$109
Lotus Smartsuite Millen. Full	$299
Lotus Smartsuite Millen. Upg	$195
NEW Macromedia DreamTeam (Includes Flash, Fireworks & Dreamweaver 2)	$929
Macromedia Dreamweaver2 - NEW	$489
Macromedia Fireworks 2 - NEW	$359
Macromedia FLASH V4	$515
Macromedia Freehand V8	$595
MasterClips 1,250,000	$175
McAfee Office 2000 - NEW	$98
McAfee VirusScan V4	$69
MS Collection 98 - NEW !!! (includes: Money 98, Encarta Atlas, Greetings Workshop)	$45
MS FrontPage 2000	$169
MS FrontPage 2000 - Upgrade	$89
MS Project 98 - NEW !!!	$745
MS Project 98 - Upgrade	$309
MS Publisher 2000	$149
MS Publisher 2000 - Upgrade	$119
• SPECIAL - MS VisualBasic V6 Pro	$769
• SPECIAL - MS Visual C++V6 Pro	$769
MS Windows 98 New Install	$250
MS Windows 98 Upgrade Rev.2	$152
• SPECIAL - MS Word 97	$189
• SPECIAL - MS VisualStudio Pro	$1499
• SPECIAL - MS VisualStudio Ent	$2299
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MYOB + Payroll V8	$495
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Norton AntiVirus 2000 NEW V6	$75
Norton Cleansweep 2000 NEW V4.7	$54
Norton Ghost - 10 user	$345
Norton Ghost Personal Ed. V5.1	$119
Norton SystemWorks 2000 Std V3	$125
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Norton Utilities 2000 - NEW V4.5	$79

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PALM V $870.00

OmniForm V4 - New for 1999	$295
OmniPage Pro V9 Up/Cross	$219
OmniPage Pro V9 - New Install	$619
• SPECIAL PALM V – New !!!	$870
Paintshop Pro V6 - New Version	$189
Partition Magic V4	$98
PC Anywhere V9	$193
Reachout Enterprise	$278
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Seagate B/up V7.3 -NT Single Serv.	$859
Seagate B/up V7.3 -NT Multi Serv.	$1795
Seagate B/up V3 Win95/98	$125
Smarterm Essentials V8	$369
System Commander Del. V4	$125
TypeQuick (for Windows)	$74
VET Net Surfer AntiVirus	$83
Winfax Pro V9	$115
Winfax Pro V9 + Talkworks	$225
WinZIP V7	$65

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- Office 97 Std - Upgrade $390
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- Office 97 Std - Upgrade from $299
- Office 97 Pro - New Install* $529
- Office 97 Pro - Upgrade from $399

*Upgrade bundle with competitive product – limited stocks

Visual BASIC Professional V6
$429.00 (Save $300)

This special offer is for owners of MS Office Pro

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NEW!!! WinZip V7
$65.00
10 User pack $450

Adobe Acrobat V4
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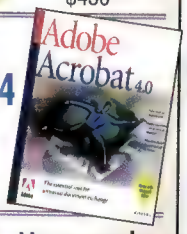

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Upgrade **$389***

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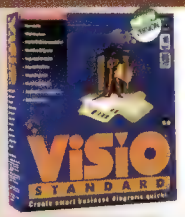
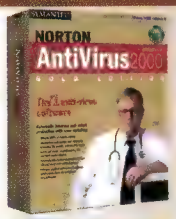
Upgrade $169





Norton **AntiVirus 2000**

NEW V6

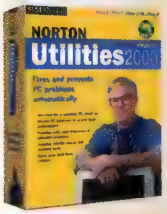
$75.00

VISIO Professional or Technical

Version 5

$539.00 ea

(New Install)



Norton **Utilities 2000**

NEW V4.5

$79.00

Corel **WordPerfect Office 2000 Standard**

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New Install **$369**

WinFax Pro

VERSION 9

For Win95/NT

$115.00

Upgrade for $99

McAfee Office2000

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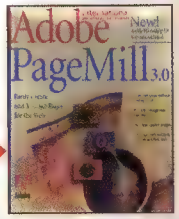
Also McAfee VirusScan V4

$69.00



Adobe **PageMill**

Version 3.0

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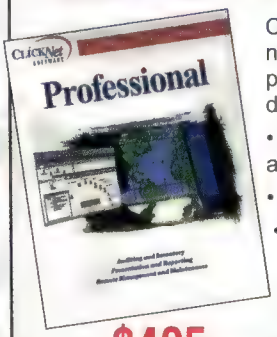
PRODUCT FOCUS

ClickNet Professional Version 5.0



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- MS WinNT Client Lic 20 Pack **$900**
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Adobe **PhotoDeluxe** Version 2.0

SPECIAL PRICE

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Upgrade

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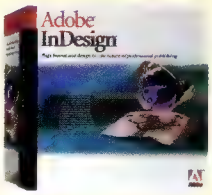

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Adobe Illustrator 8.0 Competitive Upgrade	$409.00
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Adobe PhotoShop 5.5	$1059.00
Adobe Premiere 5.1	$1049.00
Adobe Publishing Collection	$1749.00
Adobe WebCollection	$1749.00
Allaire HomeSite 4.0	$159.95
AutoCAD LT 2000	$719.00
AutoCAD LT 2000 Upgrade	$249.00
AutoSketch 6	$169.00
Backup Exec Single Server 7.3	$869.00
Borland Delphi 5 Standard	$145.00
Borland Delphi 5 Professional Upgrade	$355.00
CAD Symbols	$79.95
Canoma 1.0	$849.00
Claris HomePage 3.0	$139.95
Corel Draw 9	$1195.00
Corel Draw 9 Upgrade	$659.00
Corel Draw Select Edition	$79.00
Corel Gallery 1,000,000	$159.95
Corel WordPefect Office 2000 Enterpise Upg	$499.00
Corel WordPerfect Office 2000 Standard	$499.00
Corel WordPerfect Office 2000 Snd Upgrade	$239.00
Dragon Naturally Speaking Mobile	$619.00
Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred	$289.00
DreamHouse 3D	$49.95
Encyclopedia Britannica 99 Multimedia	$159.95
Encyclopedia Britannica 99 Standard	$84.95
Family Tree Maker 6.0 (8 CD's)	$89.95
Family Tree Maker 6.0 (15 CD's)	$159.95
FileMaker Pro 4.1	$347.00
FileMaker Pro Developer Edition	$769.00
FileMaker Pro Server 3.0	$1289.00
FloorPlan 3D Deluxe	$64.95
FloorPlan 3D Design Suite	$84.95
FloorPlan 3D Remodelling Suite	$114.95
Headline Studio	$469.00
Home Architect 3.0	$59.00
Instant Accounting	$179.00
Instant Cashbook	$62.00
Instant Invoices	$62.00
Instant Point of Sale	$449.00
i Share 3.0 - 3 users	$165.00
Kai's Photo Soap 2	$69.00
KPT 5	$275.00
LapLink Pro	$185.00
Logomotion 2.1	$179.00
Lost & Found	$99.00
Macromedia Director Shockwave Studio 7	$1699.00
Macromedia DreamTeam	$899.00
Macromedia DreamWeaver 2.0	$495.00
Macromedia Fireworks 2.0	$339.00
Macromedia Flash 4	$529.00
MasterClips 1,000,000	$185.00
MasterClips 1,250,000	$189.00
MasterClips 3D Artist	$69.00
MAUS MasterPlan Pro	$165.00
MAUS Stockmarket Plus	$165.00
McAfee Nuts & Bolts 98	$89.00
McAfee Virus Scan	$69.00
MS Access 2000	$489.00
MS Access 2000 Upgrade	$158.00
MS Encarta 2000 Deluxe	$129.00
MS Encarta 2000 Reference Suite	$175.00
MS Encarta 2000 Standard	$74.95
MS FrontPage 2000	$169.00
MS FrontPage 2000 Upgrade	$89.00
MS Money 99	$47.00
MS Office 2000 Developer Edition	$1469.00
MS Office 2000 Developer Edition Upgrade	$899.00
MS Office 2000 Premium	$1159.00
MS Office 2000 Premium Upgrade	$595.00
MS Office 2000 Pro	$865.00
MS Office 2000 Pro Upgrade	$505.00
MS Office 2000 Small Business	$739.00
MS Office 2000 Small Business Upgrade	$395.00
MS Office 2000 Standard	$719.00
MS Office 2000 Standard Upgrade	$389.00
MS Project 98	$749.00
MS Project 98 Upgrade	$299.00
MS Publisher 2000	$148.00
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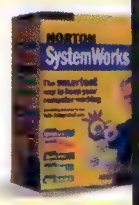

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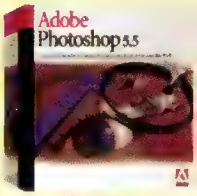

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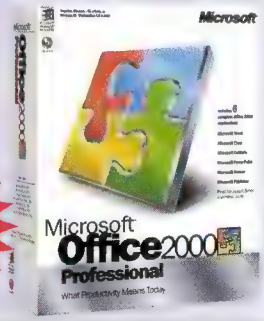

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HP Desk Jet 400/500 Series	6	8A-BKL
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EPSON Stylus Colour /PRO/XL	8	2-BKL
EPSON Stylus 820/colour II/IIs	12	23-BKL
EPSON Stylus Colour 200/300/400/500/600/800/850/1520	12	33A-BKL
EPSON Stylus Colour 440/640/740	12	33B-BKL
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HP Colour Desk Jet 300/400/500 Series & Olivetti!	3x12	14A-CLR
HP Colour Desk Jet 600C/660C/690C Series	3x12	14B-CLR
HP Desk Jet 850C/855C/870C/1000C Series	3x3	30A-CLR
HP Desk Jet 710/720/890 Series	3x3	30B-CLR
EPSON Stylus Colour /PRO/XL	3x4	16-CLR
EPSON Stylus 820/colour II/IIs	3x12	24-CLR
EPSON Stylus Colour 200/300/400/500/600/800/850/1520	3x12	34A-CLR
EPSON Stylus Colour 440/640/740	3x12	34B-CLR
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CANON BJ10/BJ200/BJ210/BJ210sp/BJ255sp	7	C2/C2A
CANON BJC600/610/620	15	C5
CANON BJC4000/4100 /4200/4550 BCI-21/20	50/8	C8
CANON BJC 6000	4	C19
CANON BJC 7000	12	C15
HP DESKJET 400, 500 & 600 SERIES	7	H2/H4
HP DESKJET 820C/850C/855C/870C/1000C	6	H6
HP DESKJET 720/890/Officejet 1150	6	H13
HP DESKJET 1200 B, Y, C, M	6	H8
EPSON STYLUS COLOUR 750/900/1200	12	E#
EPSON STYLUS 400/800/1000	8	E1
EPSON STYLUS COLOUR / PRO / XL	6	E2
EPSON STYLUS 820 / COLOUR 11/11S/200	12	E4
EPSON COLOUR 400/500/600/700/Photo Ex	12	E7
EPSON COLOUR 440/640/740/800/850/1520	12	E7
EPSON STYLUS COLOUR 750/900/1200	12	E14
IBM 4076/LEXMARK	6	M1
OLIVETTI	8	H1
XEROX 4004/C.ITOH CJ300	6	M3

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CANON BJC70/80	60	C11
CANON BJC210/BJC210sp/BJC255sp	10	C3
CANON BJC600/610/620	8	C6
CANON BJC4000/4100/4200/4550 BCI-21	30	C9
CANON BJC 7000	6	C16
HP DESKJET 400, 500 & 600 SERIES	12	H3/H5
HP DESKJET 820C/850C/855C/870C/1000C	6	H7
HP DESKJET 720/890/Officejet 1150	4	H14
EPSON STYLUS COLOUR / PRO / XL	6	E3
EPSON STYLUS 820/COLOUR/11/11S	12	E5
EPSON COLOUR 200/400/500/600/800/1520	12	E8/E9
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Canon 210SP	BC03/BX03	3	27CB
Canon BJ-300/330	BJI-642	2	26BB
Canon BJC-600 Series	BJC-201	6	25BB
Canon/Apple BJC-4000/5500	BCI-21B	15	07BB
Canon/Apple BJC-4000/5500	BC-20	3	04BB
Canon BJC-7000 & Optimiser	BC-60	2	52BB
HP Deskjet 400/500 Series	51626A/33M	2/3	16BB
HP Deskjet 600 Series	51629A	2	14BB
HP Deskjet 800 Series/1600c	51645A	2	12BB
Epson Stylus 400/800/1000 (1st rel.)	SO20025	6	23BB
Epson Stylus Colour/Pro/XL	SO20034/62	4/2	22BB
Epson Stylus Colour 820/11/11s	SO20047	4	20BB
Epson Colour 400/500/600	SO20093	6	18BB
Epson Colour 800/1520	SO20108	4	18BB
IBM 4076 Lexmark 1000/1020/2070 Black		3	05BB
Xerox 4004 C-ITOCH	CJ300	3	49BB

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Canon BJC-600 Series	BJC-201	3x10	24XX
Canon/Apple BJC-4000/5500 Series	BCI-21C	3x30	06XX
Canon BJC-7000	BCI-61	3x4	51XX
HP Deskjet 400/500 Series	51625A	3x10	15XX
HP Deskjet 600 Series	51649A	3x10	13XX
HP Deskjet 800 Series/1600c	51641A	3x6	11XX
Epson Stylus 200/500	SO20097	3x10	19XX
Epson Stylus Colour/Pro/XL	SO20036/66	3x8/2	21XX
Epson Stylus 820/11/11s	SO20049	3x10	19XX
Epson Stylus 400/600/800/1520	SO20089	3x10	17XX
IBM 4076 Lexmark 1000/1020/2070 Colour		3x6	34XX

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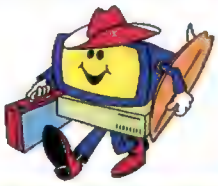

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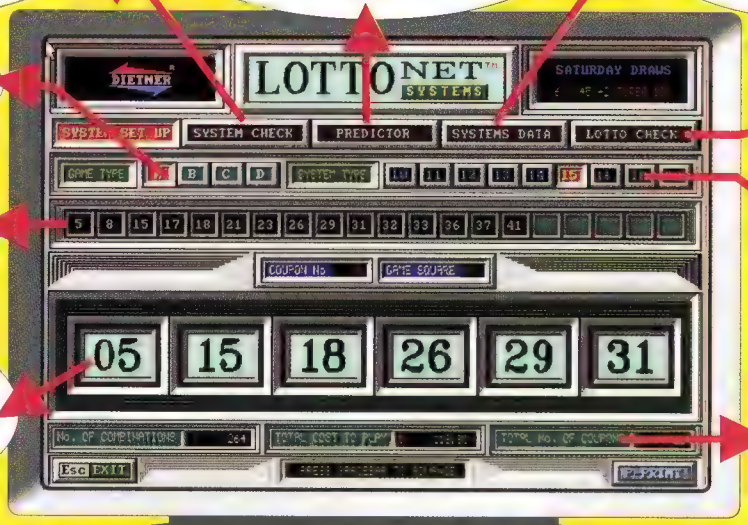

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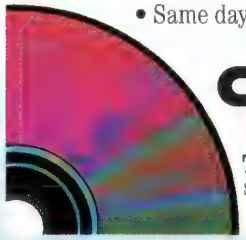

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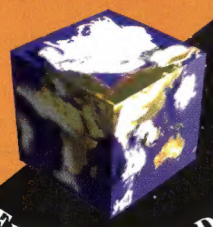

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(Please ensure you read and understand these guidelines)

1. The Small Business Show Software Awards are open to Australian software companies and software developers of business applications. Subsidiaries of overseas companies or their employees are not eligible.
2. The awards are open to all major platforms:Windows, Mac O/S, Unix and OS/2.
3. Each entry must include the entry form, a full operating set of the software and any appropriate manuals or support materials. You may send a demonstration disk in addition to the full operating software for information purposes only. However it will not be considered for the judging process, Internet applications must be submitted on 3.5 inch disk or CD-ROM. Internet applications will be judged online, ensure correct URL is included in entry.
4. The Small Business Show reserves the right to return each entry software package for consideration for future stories for the program and therefore will not be returned to the entrant. For this reason we suggest that each entrant ensures they retain original disks and manuals.
5. Entries must be received by The Small Business Show no later than 5pm Monday November 8. This is an absolute deadline. Entries received after this date be ineligible for judging.
6. All individuals and companies who entered the Awards in 1995, 1996 and 1997 are eligible to enter again this year.
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A representative of The Small Business Show or the judging panel will contact you if further information is necessary.

Entries close strictly at 5pm, Monday, November 8. All entries are maintained under strict security. The finalists will be announced on the Nine Network's The Small Business Show on Sunday, November 28. The winner will be announced on Sunday, December 5. Send your entry to: Software Awards, The Small Business Show, Nine Network, P.O. Box 27 Willoughby, NSW 2068

Entry Form

Full name of applicant/business: _____

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Format/platform: _____

Business Address: _____

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Contact name: _____

Entry category:Main ☐ Main & Internet ☐ Australia-Specific ☐

Name/s of developers: _____

Time frame and Location of development _____

Is software package north market (tick answer) YES ☐ NO ☐

Brief description of software package, it's application and the market for which it has been created: _____

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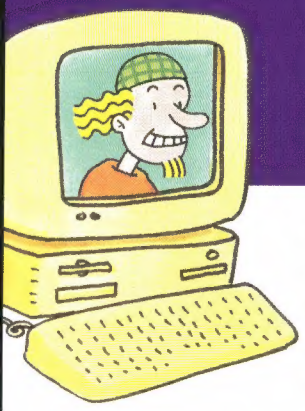

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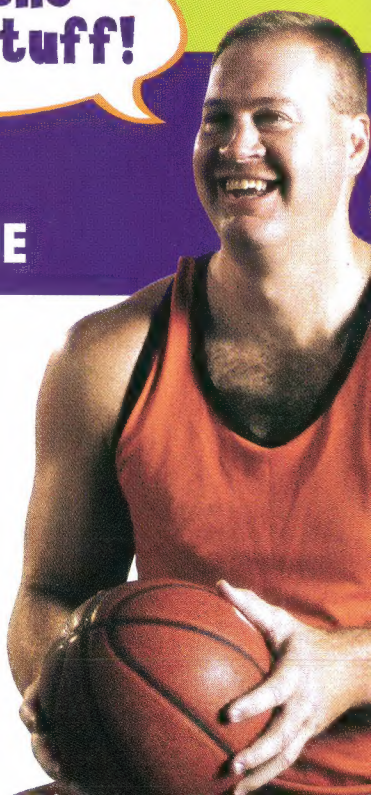

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